

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

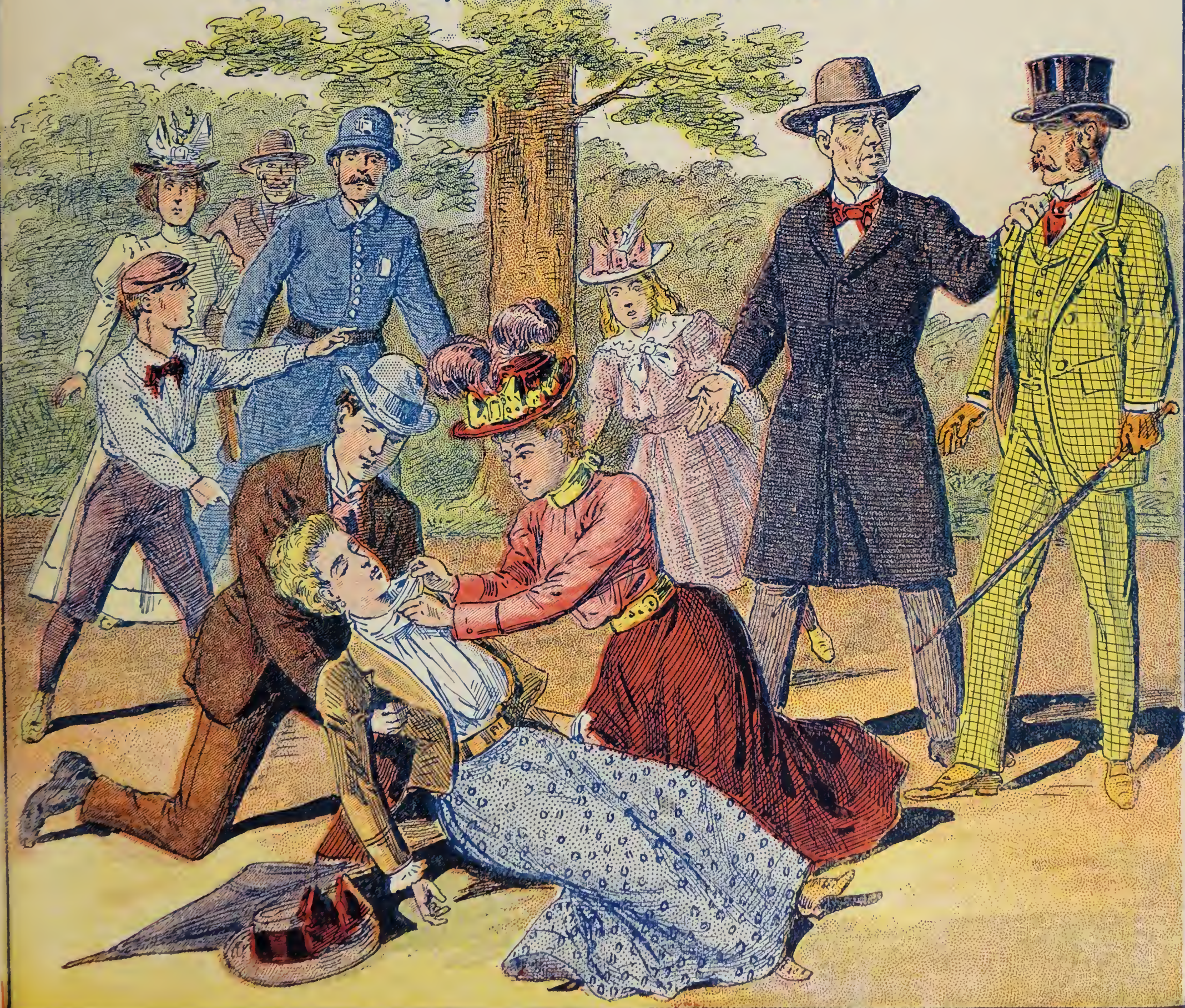
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No. 40.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 27, 1899.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS' STAR CASE; OR WORKING FOR LOVE AND GLORY



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(Continued on page 3 of cover.)

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THE BRADYS' STAR CASE;

OR,

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BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

CHAPTER I.

AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY.

One pleasant afternoon late in the fall, two men sat in a small room in the lower part of New York City not far from the Post Office.

The one, an elderly man wearing a long blue coat of peculiar cut, was busily writing in a big book; the other, who was much younger, but in dress and appearance still bore a certain resemblance to his companion, was trying to read the paper, at the same time making strenuous efforts to smoke a cigar which positively would not burn.

There was something striking in the appearance of both these men, and, before going any further, we may as well mention right here that they were both in their way celebrated characters, being none other than America's most famous detectives, Old and Young King Brady, whose fame has been spread all over the United States.

Business had been decidedly dull for several weeks with the Bradys.

The elder detective had finished up a celebrated case in Chicago, and, what was unusual with him, had, upon his return, found nothing upon his order book to take its place.

As for Young King Brady, or Harry, as he was usually called, he had recently returned from a run to the City of Mexico, from which place he had brought back with him a noted bank defaulter.

Upon his arrival in New York, Harry, who, by the way, was no relation of Old King Brady, although a pupil and bearing the same name, had found his principal absent in the West, and now that they were together again, both found themselves in the unusual situation of having nothing to do.

Old King Brady, having completed the entry which he was making in the big book, blotted the page, closed the

book, returned it to its place in the safe, and then leaned back in his chair.

"It's no use talking, Harry," he remarked, "things are mighty quiet. Do you know, I think I'll take a run into the country for a week or so."

"It might do you good, governor," replied Harry, turning over the paper.

"I need a rest."

"You are getting it as it is."

"No, Harry, you are mistaken there. I am not getting it."

"Well, I am, then."

"It may be rest to you, my boy, to do nothing, but it is not to me. If I could get away from the office and put business out of my mind altogether I might rest, but, as it is is—what's the matter now?"

Harry had suddenly thrown his cigar into the cuspidor with great violence, and at the same time given the paper a toss over on the table.

"I'm mad!" he exclaimed, springing up and beginning to pace the floor.

"Upon my word, you act as though you had taken leave of your senses. Such violence doesn't belong to our business, my boy."

"Well, do you suppose I'd show it anywhere but here, governor?"

"I hope not. What are you mad about, using the word in the sense which I have no doubt you intended?"

"With that infernal cigar. It is the worst I ever undertook to smoke."

"That's not all, Harry."

"No, it isn't. I've been reading up the Akerman case."

"Ah! I thought as much."

"I'm mad at the stupidity displayed by those detectives. They act like asses, not to say idiots."

"Just so," replied Old King Brady dryly. "If we had the case in hand we would——"

"Make something out of it, you bet!"

"Well, we'd try, Harry. They have been three days at it now, and have made no headway at all."

"That's what vexes me, governor. Why didn't we get that case?"

"New inspector up at headquarters."

"I suppose so. You don't know him at all, I believe?"

"Not at all. I failed to pay my respects to him when he went into office, and this is the result."

"I've a good mind to go to work on the case anyhow, on my own account."

"No," said Old King Brady emphatically. "We take no police case uninvited."

"I'd do it for glory."

"Don't pay."

"That's all very well for you, governor, but it's different with me. I must be doing something."

"Well, I'll give you a job," laughed Old King Brady. "Stay here and mind the office till I come back."

This, naturally, did not please Young King Brady very much. He fidgeted about the office for a few moments after the elder man had left and then sat down to write a letter.

He had about half finished when a timid knock was heard on the door.

"Come in!" shouted Young King Brady with a muttered exclamation against fools who knock at office doors.

But his whole manner changed when the door opened.

A young woman dressed in the cheap garments of a working girl stood at the door.

She seemed confused and did not immediately obey Harry's request to "walk in."

"I thought—I wanted to see Old King Brady," she said in a hesitating way.

"Mr. Brady has just stepped out," replied Harry, coming forward. "Won't you be seated? He will be back presently. Meantime, I'm his partner, and if there is anything I can do——"

Young King Brady paused, he scarcely knew why.

There was something about the girl which awakened feelings entirely unusual in this young man.

Harry had never been in love, or he might have known better what they meant.

All he did know then was that he had never seen a more beautiful girl in all his life, and he felt that there could be no request she might make of him that he would not be prepared to grant.

"I do not know, sir, that you can do anything for me," she said slowly. "I—er—that is, I am presuming a great deal to come here, for I am only a poor working girl, and have no money to pay for the services of a detective whose time must be as valuable as yours and—and Old King Brady's, but——"

"Proceed, I beg of you, Miss," said Harry when she paused. "We are not at all busy at present. If there is anything we can do for you——"

"There is, but I cannot afford to pay."

"We'll waive that. State your case."

"May I tell my story in my own way, sir?" asked the girl, hesitatingly.

"I wish you would."

"But I say again——"

"If you are going to say again that you have no money, please don't."

"You are very kind, sir. I'm sure I need a friend, if ever anyone did. I——"

Here the tears which she had been trying to hold back came with a rush.

"Don't cry," said Harry earnestly. "Don't cry. If there is anything in the world we can do for you, consider it done. Never mind about the pay. You can pay when you get the money or—or not at all."

The girl thanked him in broken accents.

In a moment after she had regained calmness and began as follows:

"My name is Dora Akerman, sir. I am the niece of Peter Akerman, the millionaire who was found murdered in his house on Fifth Avenue a few days ago."

Young King Brady listened in amazement. Every instinct in his nature was aroused now.

So then the great Akerman murder case was coming his way after all, but even if it had been otherwise Harry would have listened just as earnestly.

Not only were his sympathies fully aroused, but we may as well admit it right here, Young King Brady for the first time in his life was smitten by a woman's charms.

Perhaps we had better call it a case of love at first sight, and have done with it. Certainly it looked very much that way.

But to resume.

"I see you look surprised," said Miss Akerman, "but what I tell you is true. Myself and my sister Therese are the daughters of Mr. Akerman's brother, with whom he had nothing to do for many years. We were born and brought up in a small town in this State. Our father died when we were little children, and our mother dying also about a year ago we came to New York to try and support ourselves. I found work in a photograph gallery on Fifth Avenue, and Therese entered the employ of one of the large department stores. We roomed together in a house in Bank Street, and although our means were small we lived there very comfortably, Mr. Brady, until Sunday last, when my sister mysteriously disappeared."

There was going to be more crying then, but Young King Brady warded it off by beginning to question the girl, feeling that he could easier arrive at the gist of her story that way.

"Sunday last! That is supposed to be the day of the Akerman murder, miss."

"Yes, sir. On that afternoon my sister received a letter brought by a district messenger boy. It threw us into a great state of excitement. Here it is. You can understand the case better after you have read it."

The letter which Dora Akerman held out to Harry read as follows:

"MY DEAR NIECE:—You may be somewhat surprised to receive this from me. Nor can I expect it to be otherwise, inasmuch as I have always ignored your presence and that

of your sister in New York, although I have been aware of it for some time.

"I am growing old and may not live long. I desire, therefore, to make the acquaintance of my nieces, who are my only surviving relatives. It is my desire that you call on me this evening. I will send a carriage. I am somewhat of an invalid, and cannot bear much excitement, for which reason I must request you to come alone. Your sister I will send for at some other time, say next Sunday; it is because I am informed that you are both actively engaged during the week that I choose that day. The carriage will call at six o'clock, and will be at your disposal when you desire to return. Let bygones be bygones, and pay your old uncle a visit. It can do you no harm, and it may be the means of benefiting you some of these days.

"Affectionately yours,

"PETER AKERMAN."

"Well, did she go?" asked Harry, handing the letter back.

"Yes, and never returned," replied the girl tearfully. "Next morning came the report of the murder. Oh, Mr. Brady, pity me! I have been like a crazy woman ever since."

"And no wonder," replied Harry. "This is very strange. Do you mean to tell me that your sister went away from your home in Mr. Akerman's private carriage and has not been seen since?"

"That is exactly the case, all except one thing."

"Which is?"

"The carriage was not my uncle's. I have learned since that he never kept one."

"Ah! Do you know certainly that your sister ever reached Mr. Akerman's house at all?"

"No, sir."

"This is important. Have you informed the police?"

"Well, I tried to, sir, but—but I was insulted at the station. They would not listen to me, and—and—well, I did not go again."

"Fools!" muttered Young King Brady. Then aloud he added:

"I don't blame you, but go on with your story. Tell me what you did that night."

"Why, I waited up till almost midnight, sir, and then I started out to look for my sister."

"Did you go to Mr. Akerman's house?"

"Yes; and rang the bell again and again, and yet no answer."

"And then?"

"Then I saw a policeman coming along the block. I was frightened and I ran away."

"What did you do then?"

"I hardly know. I was so excited that I seemed to have lost all control of my thoughts. All I can tell you is that toward morning I found myself back at our room in Bank Street. I have been very ill since then, Mr. Brady, but I was able to get up to Fifth Avenue again."

"And the house was in the hands of the police?"

"Yes."

"Of course you had heard of the murder of your uncle when you went there the second time?"

"Certainly. I read the account in the paper next morning, and it drove me almost crazy."

"That was the day you went to Mr. Akerman's house?"

"I went at once."

"Well, and what did you learn?"

"Nothing—nothing at all."

"Whom did you see?"

"The policeman at the door."

"Did you state your business?"

"As well as I could."

"And what did he say?"

"He seemed to think me a mere curiosity seeker at first. He told me I couldn't come in."

"Exactly! And after you told your story he insulted you?"

"He ordered me off; told me I must be crazy; that Mr. Akerman kept no carriage. He said that if I came bothering around there he would have me arrested. I was glad to get away."

"A bright bird that," murmured Young King Brady. "Well?"

"Well, I don't know that there is anything more to tell you," sighed the girl. "I have been sick ever since. I am poor and friendless, and don't know what to do. This morning it suddenly occurred to me that a good detective might be able to help me. I have heard so much about Old King Brady that I thought I would come and tell him the whole story. I had been told that he was a most kind-hearted man, and I felt that even if he could not spend his time looking for my sister he might at least advise me what to do."

"And you made no mistake, miss," replied Harry earnestly. "I can answer for my partner as well as for myself."

"And you will advise me, sir I——"

"I will do more than that, miss. I will find your sister if I can."

"How can I ever thank you, sir?"

"Do not try. Put your case in my hands, and if your sister is still on earth she shall be found."

There was some further talk between them.

Every time Harry looked into those great melting black eyes he was more deeply smitten.

Ten minutes later Old King Brady returned and found Harry "making up" before the glass as an old man.

"What in the world are you doing?" he asked.

"Going to work," replied Harry quietly.

"Humph! I should say so. What are you going to work for in that rig?"

"For love," replied Young King Brady with a short laugh.

"Unprofitable business, my boy."

"That depends, governor."

"But I was about to add that I am pretty near as bad."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm going to work, too, for something equally unprofitable."

"Hello! are you in—I mean are you going to work for love too?"

Old King Brady shot a quick glance at his pupil.

"No," he said, "I'm not weak enough to indulge in any

such nonsense. I'm going to work for glory, seeing that I can't get a chance to work for cash."

"And the case?"

"You'll be surprised when I tell you."

"Same here."

"What's your case, Harry?"

"I asked first."

"Mine is that unsolved mystery, the Akerman murder."

"So is mine."

"You don't mean it?"

"I do."

"But what started you on that tack?"

"No matter. I'll tell you later. Meanwhile let's each go our own way and try to make this our star case. We'll take this Akerman mystery in hand without saying a word to anybody and work for love and glory."

CHAPTER II.

A CLEW IN A BOX.

Old Peter Akerman was one of those queer geniuses who are often met with in large cities.

He was reputed to be worth several millions, made nobody knew how or where.

This in itself was or should have been an excuse for any eccentricity, but in Peter Akerman's case it was not.

The reasons are simple.

Mr. Akerman was a bachelor, and instead of living as a wealthy bachelor should he built himself a great mansion on the upper part of Fifth Avenue opposite the Park, furnished it in the most luxurious fashion, and then shut himself up in the house to live a hermit's life, which he continued for many years.

Surrounded by every luxury which wealth could provide this strange man lived in his library and cooked his own meals.

Originally he kept a man of all work, but no woman was ever allowed to enter the house.

About four years before the opening of our story the man left him abruptly and Mr. Akerman had never made any effort to fill his place, but had remained in the great house entirely alone, sometimes not crossing the threshold for days together.

Such was the man; now for the murder.

At about half-past nine o'clock in the evening a young man who happened to be passing the house was alarmed by hearing the cry of murder proceeding from Mr. Akerman's residence.

He stopped to listen and saw a light suddenly flash behind the drawn shades and then the cry was repeated, whereupon the young man, being a brave, common-sense fellow, ran up the steps and tried to force an entrance to the house.

This, however, proved to be impossible. He knocked and rang and shouted, but all in vain.

Meanwhile the light had disappeared from the window and all was still inside the big house.

Failing in his efforts to effect an entrance the young man did the next best thing, ran for a policeman and assisted him in breaking in.

They found Mr. Akerman stretched upon the floor of his library dead, his brains beaten out with some blunt instrument.

The most persistent search of the premises revealed nobody, nor any trail of the murderer.

Moreover, every window and door was found locked and the mystery was deepened by this circumstance.

It seemed quite impossible to explain how the murderer had managed to leave the house.

Such was the crime.

The days which had followed shed no light upon the mystery.

The police had taken it in hand and several detectives were put on the case, but their work had gone for nothing.

Meanwhile another mystery had developed.

Who was Mr. Akerman? Of what did his property consist? Who was his attorney, if he had one, and who were his heirs?

These were the natural questions which Old King Brady put to the captain of the precinct when he met him by appointment at the Fifth Avenue mansion that afternoon.

"Of course I knew you'd ask these things, Mr. Brady," replied the captain, "but I can't answer any of your questions but one. We've all be asking each other the same questions for a week, but the answers don't come."

The scene of this conversation was also the scene of the murder, the library of the great house.

Except for the policeman who guarded the door the captain and the great detective found themselves alone.

The body of the murdered man lay in a private undertaking establishment where Old King Brady had viewed it before making any other move.

"Answer the one you can, captain," replied Old King Brady. "Half a loaf is better than no bread."

"It is the question of least importance," replied the captain. "We have found out by the records in the tax office that Mr. Akerman's property consists largely of real estate."

"That's something. Where is this real estate located?"

"Well, there is this house for one thing."

"Mortgaged?"

"No. Free and clear."

"Well?"

"Then there is a row of ten dwellings on West Thirty-fourth Street."

"Yes."

"And a dozen or more tenement houses in Elizabeth Street."

"Not all?"

"No. There are two or three factories in Brooklyn and some more tenement property over there. There isn't a dollar owing on any of it. All is free and clear."

"And the bank account?"

"We can't find that there is any."

"Stocks and bonds?"

"We know of none."

"Money in the house?"

"None was found. The deceased had forty-three dollars on his person, but that is all."

"What about the heirs?"

"There you go. I can tell you nothing. One would suppose that they would hear of the murder and come forward, but we have heard from no one as yet."

"Where did the man come from? What's his record?"

"That we can't answer. He has lived here alone for many years. We do not even know how or where he made his money. It's all a mystery from beginning to end, but the detectives are hard at work."

"Exactly," replied Old King Brady. "Now, captain, the inspector has given you permission to leave this case in my hands for forty-eight hours. If I don't succeed in obtaining a clew in that time I am to withdraw."

"That's the size of it, Brady. I hope——"

"That I shall succeed. So do I; still I may not. I am going right to work now, though, and I want to be alone."

"That's right. I will leave you, but——"

"What?"

"I was just going to say that you needn't go hungry here. We need some one to look after the premises, and I have sent for a man who can cook. I'm expecting him every minute. You see I want to keep at least one officer there all the time, and up here on the avenue it is inconvenient for him to go out for his meals."

"I'd rather be entirely alone in the house," replied the detective, "but still I don't want to interfere with your plans. Where is this man coming from?"

"From an intelligence office on Sixth Avenue that has often supplied help to the department before. You may expect him any time. After all it is just as well to have some one in the house."

Shortly after this the captain left and Old King Brady returned to the library and stood for a moment surveying the blood stains on the carpet which marked the spot where the body of Mr. Akerman had been found.

Nothing had been disturbed in the library, and the detective found ample occupation for the next few moments in taking a survey of his surroundings.

It was rather a large room, and the windows opened upon a shallow back yard.

Beyond the fence which marked the end of Mr. Akerman's premises was a vacant lot.

The detective saw at once that if the murderer had been able to leave the house in any way there need have been no difficulty about his making his escape.

He could easily have climbed the fence and dropped into the lot where there was the foundation for a house which had never been built.

But on the other hand there was the sworn testimony of the policeman who had first entered the house that every door and window was fastened.

"Perhaps he was mistaken," muttered Old King Brady, "but we'll think of that later on."

He approached the table which was covered with books, many of which were open and turned face downward.

"The dead man was a student," thought the detective. "No doubt he was sitting in this chair reading when the murderer entered the room."

The chair was pushed back from the table far enough to enable a man to rise.

Near it stood a tripod, upon which was a camera, a small affair, enclosed in a black box.

The bulb hung down, and Old King Brady saw that it was within reach of the hand of anyone who might have been sitting in the chair.

"What about this?" thought the detective. "Was the dead man in the act of taking a picture of his own room at the time of the murder or was this camera placed here by mere accident?"

It seemed a line of thought worth following up, and Old King Brady proceeded to study the position of the camera.

It was pointed at the handsome onyx mantel over which hung a portrait of a young and rather good-looking man.

The cap was off the camera and lay on the table, and on the mantel beside the portrait stood a large lamp from which the shade had been removed.

The detective saw at a glance that when the lamp was lit its light must have shone full on the portrait.

"I believe the old fellow was trying to take a long exposure picture of that portrait at the moment of his death," thought Old King Brady. "I must see what is inside that box."

He proceeded to investigate and soon discovered a plate in position.

Here might or might not be a most important clew.

Old King Brady was at a loss to understand how the detectives had come to overlook it as they unquestionably had.

"It's a good point of beginning anyhow," he murmured. "I rather think I'm going to find a clew in that box."

The idea seemed to gather force with Old King Brady as he considered it.

He made up his mind to go to work on the camera at once.

Of course to open the box there in the light would be to destroy the plate and wipe out any chance there might be to discover the supposed clew.

"I need the help of a photographer," thought the detective.

He took the camera off the tripod, wrapped it in a piece of paper, and went out into the hall.

"Officer, I am going out for a little while," he said. "Let no one in but the captain until I return."

"All right, sir," replied the policeman, whose instructions were to obey the detective to the letter.

"Even the man who has been engaged as caretaker or cook or whatever you have a mind to call it," added the detective. "If he comes while I am gone tell him to call again."

"I'll do it, Mr. Brady," replied the officer, and then the detective opened the door and hurried out of the house.

He turned the corner and went directly over to Third Avenue.

Here, as he suspected would be the case, he had no difficulty in finding a photograph gallery.

Fortunately there was no sitter on hand when he entered, and the proprietor was willing enough to develop the plate at the detective's request.

Old King Brady insisted upon following him into the dark room where the box was opened.

"Yes, there is a plate here," said the photographer. "Of course I can't give you a print of this to-day, but I can develop the plate and you may be able to get some idea of what there is on it."

"That's what I want," replied Old King Brady, who had told a story to fit the occasion.

The photographer then proceeded to take out the plate.

As he did so a scrap of paper which had evidently been put into the camera to fill up and steady the plate in its position fell to the floor.

Old King Brady quietly picked it up.

There seemed to be writing on the paper, but there in the photographer's dark room he could not make out what it was.

He put it in his pocket and waited, and the development of the plate was completed.

"What do you make out of it?" asked the detective as the photographer held it up in the light of the ruby ray.

"What do you see on it?" was the reply.

"Blest if I can see anything at all on it."

"I suppose not, and yet there is a lot there."

"What?"

"It's the interior of a room."

"That's right."

"There's a mantelpiece and a grate under it, and, yes, there is a picture on the wall behind that man."

"Man! What man? Is there a man in the picture?" asked the detective eagerly.

"Yes, and a woman, too."

"No! You don't mean it?"

"Oh, but I do."

"Can you really see all this on that plate?"

"Certainly I can, and so could you if you were as accustomed to looking at them as I am."

"What are these people doing?"

"Oh, that's more than I can tell you. I can only see them in outline."

"I suppose I shall have to wait for the print before I can learn any more."

"You certainly will."

"When can I have it?"

"To-morrow, if it is a clear day."

There was no help for it; nothing to do but to wait.

Old King Brady followed the photographer out of the dark room.

When he got into the light he pulled out the paper and read as follows:

"—— and if I am ever found murdered, as I fully expect I shall be some day, let search be made for Richard Man——"

Here the writing ended abruptly, for the paper had been torn off.

And yet it was a clew.

But would it amount to anything?

"Confound him! Why didn't he put the rest of that sheet of paper in the box?" muttered the detective.

But the photographer could read nothing in the detective's face as he pocketed the paper and hurried away.

CHAPTER III.

ABOUT THE MAN WHO CALLED AT MIDNIGHT.

Old King Brady hurried back to the Fifth Avenue mansion feeling that his work was but just begun.

"I wish I had kept Harry with me," he muttered as he ascended the steps. "I could use the boy now."

Old King Brady was thinking of the clew which he had found in the box.

To be sure the information which might come out of said box was not all in his hands as yet.

There was no telling what the print of the plate might reveal.

What the detective was thinking about was the paper.

He would have liked to start Young King Brady off to interview every man in New York whose name began with Man.

Still this would have been a wild goose chase.

The name might be plain Man, or Mann, or Manning, or Mandeville, or Mannering, or any one of half a dozen others.

Further than that it by no means followed that the murderer was the person Mr. Akerman had in mind.

The paper was old and yellow, and had evidently been written a long time.

Further still there was no proof that Mr. Akerman ever wrote the words upon it.

In Old King Brady's judgment the clew in the box amounted to very little, still it was a clew.

"Has anybody called since I've been gone, officer?" asked the detective as the policeman admitted him to the house.

"Yes, sir; the man the captain spoke of came just after you had gone."

"Ah! you obeyed my orders, I hope?"

"Yes, sir; I had to, them being the captain's orders. I had to send him away."

"Which you didn't want to do?"

"Well, sir, it's dull work sitting here alone."

"I suppose it is. You had better go out and get a bite of supper. If you forget to come back till morning no one will ever be the wiser."

"I dissent do that, Mr. Brady."

"And why not?"

"My order was to stay."

"Your orders were to obey me."

"Yes, that's so, too."

"I say go."

"And you'll be responsible?"

"Yes, if it comes to that. I shan't leave here till daylight, and there will be nobody here until then."

The policeman hesitated a little and then left the house.

It was with considerable satisfaction that Old King Brady closed the door behind him.

The old detective had a theory—whoever heard of a detective who has not?

"Whoever committed this murder left in a hurry," Old King Brady reasoned. "It is my belief that if the chance is given him he'll come back again."

Old King Brady's reasons for adopting this theory need not be gone into here.

All we have to do with is the result of the move he now made.

His first care was to close the folding doors between the library and the parlor and extinguish the light.

Then, producing his dark lantern and so placing it that the light did not shine on the windows of the library, the detective went upstairs, and, taking several heavy blankets from the beds in the chambers, brought them down and hung them up in front of the library window.

This cut off all light from the view of any one who might be watching the house from the vacant lot.

Old King Brady was proceeding on the theory that the house was being watched, and his idea was to make the watcher believe that with the exit of the policeman it had been left alone.

This done he began a thorough search of the library.

Every article of furniture was examined with the greatest care.

The books were all removed from the shelves and the space behind them carefully examined.

There was an old-fashioned secretary in the room, and every drawer was investigated. Some were unlocked, others had been forced by the detectives who had preceded Old King Brady.

No clew was discovered, and the detective scarcely expected it.

His only object was to make sure of his ground before he advanced.

All this took time, and fully an hour passed before the search was completed.

Last of all the detective began to look at the books upon the library table.

He was anxious to see what the dead man was reading at the time he was struck down.

Somewhat to his surprise he found that two of the books were late works on photography.

Another was a work on engraving and another still a noted treatise on counterfeiting, filled with illustrations of counterfeit bills.

It seemed a strange subject for a man who lived the hermit life of Mr. Akerman to be investigating; yet there were the books.

Old King Brady had scarcely finished examining them when he thought he could detect the sound of stealthy footsteps in the hall outside.

He immediately caught up his dark lantern, and drawing his revolver made a rush for the door.

He was quick enough in his movement to catch sight of a dark shadow gliding down the basement stairs.

"Hold on there! Stop or I fire!" cried the detective.

The order was not obeyed.

The shadow flitted into the lower hall and vanished as the sharp report of the detective's revolver rang through the deserted house.

Quick as lightning Old King Brady ran down the stairs fully prepared for trouble.

None came because he could find no one there.

The lower part of the house was entirely deserted.

The outer doors were locked and the detective had the keys in his pocket, and every window was fastened on the inside.

Here was more mystery.

Old King Brady spent a good half hour in his search, taking in even the cellar, but it was all in vain.

And yet once he distinctly heard a chuckling laugh behind him.

This would have been enough to scare most men, but it only served to make Old King Brady the more anxious to find out what it meant.

Forced to give it up at last he returned to the library about as deeply puzzled as he had ever been in his life.

It was getting late now, and Old King Brady had the rest of the house to examine.

As he wandered through the deserted rooms alone he found himself lost in wonder at the beauty of their furnishing.

Why Mr. Akerman should have kept up all this luxury for himself alone was a puzzling question.

One thing struck Old King Brady forcibly, and that was the fact that the rooms were in fairly good order and by no means presented the dusty, deserted appearance that might have been expected.

"They look as though they had been occupied right along," thought the detective, "but according to all accounts that cannot be."

Once more he returned to the library.

The moment he entered it he realized that some one had been there in his absence.

The position of the camera had been altered and several of the books on the table which he had been careful to restore to their original positions had been misplaced.

"This is getting serious," thought Old King Brady. "I'm not alone here, that's clear. I begin to half wish I hadn't let the officer go."

He sat down beside the table in Mr. Akerman's big chair.

As he did so he perceived a drawer which had been pushed away in under the table, and he hurried to open it, as it was the only drawer in the room which he had left unexamined.

There was a small bottle in the drawer and a handkerchief.

The bottle contained some sort of colorless liquid.

Old King Brady shook it up and examined it, and then did what if any one else had done it he would have considered a very foolish thing.

He pulled out the cork and smelled of the contents of the bottle.

It was acid and very pungent, and it made the detective's head swim.

"Good heavens! I've got myself into trouble, I'm afraid!" gasped Old King Brady.

He hastily corked the bottle and shutting it up in the drawer started to rise.

Instantly his worst fears were verified.

The dizzy sensation increased immediately.

A strange weakness seized the detective.

His legs seemed incapable of supporting him.

With a sickly gasp he sank back into the big chair and his head dropped forward on the table.

"Poisoned, by thunder!" he heard a voice exclaim behind him, and as his eyes cleared he had a dim consciousness of seeing a man spring into the room.

But Old King Brady was not poisoned.

The liquid in the bottle was a powerful drug known only in the far East, the name of which we cannot divulge here for the excellent reason that when Old King Brady came to furnish the points of this story he preferred to keep it to himself.

The effects of the drug when inhaled are to throw the victim into a deep sleep which may last for hours or a shorter period, according to the strength of the inhalation.

In Old King Brady's case, as he afterward learned, the sleep lasted until shortly after midnight.

When he awoke the detective found himself lying stretched out upon the library lounge quite alone.

The gas had been lighted and was burning dimly, and some one had thrown a blanket over the old man.

But half awake yet and incapable of fully taking in his surroundings, Old King Brady let his eyes wander about the room trying to get back his scattered senses.

It seemed to him that he could hear some one moving about overhead, and he tried to rise.

This was impossible.

It was as though an iron hand held him captive; he could only look and think.

As he lay he could see the door leading out into the hall.

Suddenly it was opened and a man peered into the room.

He was tall and slim, and wore side whiskers and a mustache.

This was all Old King Brady could remember about the man afterward, for as he lay all that he could see was the head and face.

Then suddenly a hand was projected through the partly open doorway.

The hand held a cocked revolver, which was raised and leveled at the detective's head.

Still Old King Brady could not move.

His senses seemed benumbed.

He struggled with himself, tried to spring from the lounge, to shout for help—to do anything to save himself from the death which he believed to be close at hand.

"There will be no rest for me while Old King Brady lives," he heard the midnight intruder whisper in a suppressed voice.

Then came the click of the cocking revolver, and Old King Brady gave himself up for lost.

Suddenly there was a wild shout in the hall outside.

Instantly the man at the door fired and sprang back.

Another shot rang out in the hall and hurried footsteps were heard on the stairs, followed instantly by others, and then a third shot rang out from the floor below.

There was a long silence after that.

Old King Brady staggered to his feet and managed to gain Mr. Akerman's big chair once more.

The shock of all this excitement had broken the force of the drug and aroused him as nothing else could have done.

Still he found himself weak and incapable of much exertion.

"I think I've seen the murderer of Peter Akerman," he murmured, "and I came precious near being his second victim, but who is the other man?"

He gained strength every instant now.

In a moment he was able to reach around to his hip pocket and lay his hand upon the little flask he always carried.

A swallow of whisky revived his energies and he began to think that he should soon be able to stand when all at once quick footsteps were heard coming up the stairs.

Old King Brady had just time to grasp his revolver, which he was not a little surprised to find still remained in his pocket, when the door was opened and a little dried up looking old man thrust his head into the room.

"Stand where you are or I'll fire!" cried the detective sternly, leveling his revolver at this new visitor.

"No you won't, boss," replied the little man in a cracked voice. "The man who kills his cook is a fool, and that's what I am?"

"Which, a cook or a fool?" asked the detective, letting the revolver drop upon the table.

"Both, I think," chuckled the man coming into the room, "but I'm not as big a fool as you."

"And why?"

"Why? I wouldn't have smelled of the bottle in that drawer before you, but you did."

"I admit that."

"It might have been your death."

"I admit that, too."

"It would have been, I actually believe, if I hadn't dosed you with whisky and quickened the action of your heart."

"I don't admit that, for I don't know what was in the bottle, but I don't want to discuss these things. I want to know who you are."

"I told you."

"You said you were both a cook and a fool."

"Right. I am the cook sent here by Captain Connors. I am a fool to have left you an instant alone in this room."

"Well," said Old King Brady slowly, "I objected to your coming here in the first place, and I don't know how you got here in the second, but I am satisfied of one thing."

"Which is what?"

"That you have saved my life."

"You're right there, old man."

"Did you catch that fellow? Is he dead?"

"No, I missed him."

"Ah! Is he still in the house?"

"No; he has left it."

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOLE IN THE WALL.

Never since the hour of his birth had Old King Brady been so near death as he was then, and yet for all that death did not come.

"How?"

"I'll tell you later. Don't you want to know how I got in?"

"Well, yes, Harry, I would like to know if it's all the same to you," replied Old King Brady, leaning back in the big chair and half closing his eyes.

The "cook" burst into a short laugh.

"Same old story, governor," he exclaimed. "There's no such thing as a fellow disguising himself from you."

"Your disguise is all right," said Old King Brady. "It's your voice which gives you away."

"But it deceived you at first?"

"Yes, for the moment, but you could not keep it up. You were in this room before."

"Certainly."

"Just as I went off asleep you stood over me."

"Of course."

"Well, well, this is a strange turn of affairs. Sit down and tell me all you know."

Under the circumstances Young King Brady could not refuse, although he had intended to keep Dora Akerman's secret to himself.

"I wanted to get in here without being suspected," he said after he had told about his interview with the young girl, "and I came mighty near doing it, because I happened to learn that Captain Connors wanted some one to come in here and look after the wants of the policemen stationed at the house."

"Yes, and I headed you off," replied Old King Brady. "Of course I had no suspicion that it was you."

"It's a good thing you did, governor."

"Why?"

"Because it was the means of my making an important discovery."

"Your discoveries have all been important, my boy. This business about the missing niece of the murdered man is of the highest importance in the case."

"Yes, of course, but I don't refer to that."

"To what, then?"

"I have found a way of getting in and out of this house even if every door and window is locked."

"I throw up the sponge!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "You have left me miles behind in the race."

"It's all in the family, governor."

"Tell me, Harry, were you in the hall outside here a couple of hours ago?"

"I was."

"Then it was you I chased down the stairs?"

"It was. I had the honor of being fired at by my most worshipful instructor."

"For which you can't blame me."

"No, I don't. I'm rather thankful to be able to add that I managed to give you the slip."

"No more thankful than I am, my boy, but what about the secret way?"

"I'll show it to you in a moment. Remember I want to hear your story before we call this confab off."

Old King Brady told it, of course.

He admitted his blunder in taking chances with the bottle.

Harry then added that he had never dreamed of the presence of the stranger in the house until a slight noise in the hall attracted his attention while he was engaged in examining the rooms on the floor above.

"Any idea who he was?" asked Old King Brady.

"Not the slightest. Have you?"

"Indeed I haven't. Did you see him plainly?"

"Didn't see him at all. Did you?"

"Oh, yes."

"What kind of a looking fellow was he?"

"Tall and slim. Wore side whiskers and a mustache."

"How old a man?"

"Oh, about forty, I should say."

"Look like a tough?"

"On the contrary; he looked like a gentleman."

"Do you think he was the murderer, governor?"

"That's more than I can say. I think if we could have caught him he would have been able to tell us who the murderer was if we could have made him talk."

"It's a pity we lost him."

"Harry, he'll come again."

"Why do you say so?"

"Because I am sure the work of these people was left unfinished the night of the murder. They are only waiting for the police to get away from the house to return."

"You think they are watching the house?"

"I'm sure of it."

"Probably they saw the policeman go away."

"Yes; and that's what brought that fellow here."

"All right, we'll lay for him. How bad do you feel?"

"So much better that I am going to forget that I was ever sick."

"That's business. Are you able to follow me?"

"Yes."

"Come on, then. I'll show you how that man got into this house and the murderer left it the same way if I know anything at all."

Old King Brady rose and followed Harry down stairs.

In spite of his confident assertion that he was all right he found himself a little shaky.

Harry took the lantern and opened a closed door at the foot of the stairs.

Old King Brady had examined this closet, but as there was nothing peculiar about its appearance he gave it no special thought.

There was a row of shelves in the back filled with old shoes, empty cigar boxes and other rubbish.

Harry put his hand in under the top shelf and touched a secret spring.

Immediately the whole set of shelves swung around.

"Follow me," said Young King Brady, and they stepped in behind them.

They now found themselves in a narrow passage, and right ahead was a flight of steps so narrow that the two detectives had to go down sideways.

At the foot of these steps was a dark passage leading off under ground.

"Hello!" exclaimed Old King Brady, "what's all this?"

"Secret passage," replied Harry quietly.

"Leads under the back yard, don't it?"

"That's the idea."

"You're sharp to find it, my boy. I looked in that closet, but I never dreamed of this."

"Perhaps I shouldn't if I had looked into the closet."

"Ah! that means you discovered the secret of the passage from the other end."

"That's the size of it, governor."

"Where does it come out?"

"Follow me and see."

"We are going under the back yard," remarked Old King Brady as they walked along.

Harry assented, and in a moment they came to the end of the passage.

Their way now was blocked by what appeared to be a door made of heavy planks.

"It's really a box, as you will see in a moment," said Young King Brady.

He stooped down and touched another spring.

The box swung around and they stepped out into the cellar of an unfinished house.

"Well," exclaimed Old King Brady, "here we are in the vacant lot on the side street, I suppose."

"Yes, and that's my discovery," said Harry. "We know now how the murderer left the house, however he may have come in."

CHAPTER V.

LOOKING FOR MR. "MAN."

Nothing further occurred in the Akerman mansion that night, although the two King Bradys watched patiently until morning.

It began to look as if the Akerman case was going to be a very difficult one to solve, and secretly Old King Brady despaired of accomplishing much in the time allowed him by the Chief of Police.

"You want to drop this cook business, Harry," remarked Old King Brady. "You can't afford to fool your time away like that."

"Haven't the slightest intention of doing so," replied Young King Brady. "I only took it up so as to have the means of getting into the house whenever I wanted to. I know how to do that now, and that's enough."

"Just so," said Old King Brady musingly. "Just so."

"What do you advise, governor? McMahon will return in a few moments and we want to get out."

Old King Brady handed Harry the scrap of paper found in the camera, the nature of which he had already explained.

"Work up that clue," he quietly said.

"Just what I want to do. I thought you were going to keep it for yourself."

"No, I've got other fish to fry."

"What's hanging heavy on your mind?"

"I'll tell you later."

"Where shall we meet?"

"Here, at midnight, if we can."

"Phew! No sleep again."

"Just as you say. You don't have to work this case, my boy."

"Oh, yes, I do. I'm working for love, and that makes me all the more ambitious to do my best."

"Look here, Harry, I shall begin to think you are actually in love with that girl if you keep on talking so."

Young King Brady laughed, and just then the bell rang. It proved to be Officer McMahon returning.

The Bradys turned the house over to him and quietly withdrew.

"Good-by, governor," said Harry when they parted at the corner. "If I don't know something of the past life of old Peter Akerman before we meet at midnight you can eat my head."

"Thank you, I'd rather have a beefsteak any time," laughed the old detective.

They parted thus and went their several ways.

Old King Brady went directly over to Third Avenue and called on the photographer.

It was early in the morning yet, but the gallery was open. "I'll sit down and wait for you to make that print," said the detective. "I want it just as soon as possible, and I can do nothing till I have it in my hands."

The photographer hustled around and inside of an hour produced a very tolerable print of the plate.

Old King Brady eagerly examined it.

There was the fireplace, with the mantelpiece and portrait above, and there were two figures in the picture besides.

One was a man with a high silk hat and a checked suit. The face was thin and sallow; he had side whiskers and a mustache.

"The man who tried to kill me!" thought Old King Brady.

There could be no mistake about it.

His recollection of the face was perfectly clear.

It was certainly the man.

The other figure was that of a young girl of considerable beauty.

She stood leaning against the mantelpiece, while the man was advancing into the room.

On the girl's face was an expression of horror, while the face of the man was one of fierce rage.

He seemed to have been just coming into the room when the camera caught him; his hand was raised in a threatening way, and his lips were parted as if in the act of speaking.

Old King Brady studied the picture long and earnestly.

"Will it do?" asked the photographer.

"First rate," replied the detective, and, paying his bill, he hurried away.

"How was that picture taken?" he pondered. "and why?"

It took him some time to reason the matter out to his satisfaction, and when at last he took his mind off the subject the theory which he had formed shaped itself something like this:

"Teresa Akerman was really sent for by her uncle. She was in his library and he was taking her picture when this man suddenly burst in upon them.

"The man was angry—his face shows that.

"He was threatening—his hand shows that.

"There is nothing to show that he and the girl were acquainted, and nothing, on the other hand, to show that they were not.

"Summed up, the picture proves two facts; first, that the girl was in the house on the night of the murder; second, that the man I saw was angry with Mr. Akerman and had quarreled with him."

Such was the old detective's reasoning.

It left him just where he was before.

There was nothing about the picture to even suggest his next move.

Leaving Old King Brady to make up his mind what course to pursue, we must now return to Harry, who made a bee line for Bank street, where Dora Akerman had informed him that she could be found at any time.

Rules were strict with her employer. Dora had absented herself without leave and no excuse would be accepted; she had simply been dropped from the roll.

Dora received the detective in the parlor.

"Have you heard anything of my sister?" she eagerly demanded as she entered the room.

"No; I am sorry to say I have not," replied Harry, "but, cheer up! It will all come out right. I don't believe your sister is dead."

"Oh, if I only felt sure," sighed Dora. "I had so much hope that you would bring me good news to-day."

"I want a little information," said Harry. "Sit down and try to tell me something about your uncle."

"But I know almost nothing, sir."

"Wait. I'll question you. Where did he live before he came to New York?"

"In California, I believe."

"He was not born there?"

"I don't think so. He couldn't have been. I saw him but a few times when I was a child when he came to our house."

"Did he come on from California to see your mother?"

"He did the first time, I am sure, for I remember my mother saying so."

"And the other times?"

"I think he must have come from New York, but I really don't know."

There was nothing to be gained by following this lead and Harry at once shifted his ground.

"What was the cause of the quarrel between your uncle and your mother?" he asked.

"I never knew," replied Dora, "but I do know that my mother thought him a bad man and did not want him to come to the house. I've heard her say so many times."

"Did he ever send her money?"

"Yes; I know she used to receive money from him from time to time."

"And she kept it?"

"Yes; she said it belonged to her. Once when we were very hard pressed I remember that she wrote to him and money was brought to her by a man who made her sign some sort of a paper."

"Do you remember this man's name?"

"Why, no. I remember it began with Man, though. Yes,

it was Man-something. I ought to be able to remember the rest of it, but somehow it won't come to my mind."

"Let me help you," said Harry, and he took out a list which he had made from the directory of every name beginning with Man and began calling them off one by one.

When he came to the very singular name of Manister, Dora suddenly stopped him.

"That was the name!" she exclaimed.

"You are sure?"

"Positive. I don't see how I could have forgotten it. Yes, that was the name, but why do you ask?"

Young King Brady produced the scrap of paper and explained how and when it had been found.

"It looks like a clue," he remarked. "Would you know this man Manister if you were to see him?"

"I'm sure I would. I remember his face perfectly. Where does he live?"

"Greenpoint," replied Harry, referring to his paper. "No. 98 Laurel Street. His business is not put down here."

"Is there any other person of that name in the directory?"

"No; not in the New York directory, nor the Brooklyn nor the Jersey City. That's as far as I've gone into it yet."

"Do you think it can be the man?"

"Impossible for me to say. I think you had better go with me to Greenpoint and make sure, however. I'd like to have you see this man without letting him see you, if such a thing could be arranged."

"I'll go anywhere or do anything," replied Dora, but it is all such slow work."

"Detective work is always slow at the start," replied Young King Brady. "It often comes with a rush at the end."

Dora lost no time in preparing herself for the street.

She and Young King Brady then left the house together, going up to Twenty-third Street, and there taking a car to the Greenpoint Ferry.

Here they crossed and took a Nassau Avenue car to the Blissville Bridge.

They found themselves in one of the most unsightly neighborhoods within the limits of the Borough of Brooklyn.

There were oil yards and foul smelling factories along the banks of Newtown Creek, with vacant lots and ramshackle old frame shanties on Meeker Avenue just above the bridge.

Young King Brady went into a lager beer saloon and inquired for Laurel Street.

"It's over in the lots there somewhere," said the bartender, pointing over his shoulder. "You can go along by the creek till you come to the bone factory. That is on Laurel Street. It isn't cut through, you know."

"You're acquainted over that way?" asked Harry.

"Not at all," replied the man. "Never was over there in my life."

Harry was going to ask for Mr. Manister, but he concluded that it would be of no use, so he left the saloon and he and Dora picked their way through the mud along the edge of the creek.

After a walk of about ten minutes the detective knew that he must be coming to the bone yard.

He could smell it. It did not need a sign to tell him what was going on behind the high fence.

"There was no street here—nothing but open lots.

Away up on the hill in the direction in which the street was supposed to be the detective could see a small frame house standing alone.

It was a bare, bleak, desolate situation for a house, if ever there was one in this world.

"Miss Dora, would you object to walking up and down here a few moments?" the detective asked.

"Certainly not," replied Dora, "but what do you want to do?"

"Go into the office of the bone yard and inquire about that man."

"Go then, by all means. I will walk along toward the house slowly. You can soon catch up with me."

"I may not speak to you when I do. If I think there is any danger of our being watched I shall pass you right by."

"What shall I do in that case?"

"Cross right over to Meeker Avenue and walk back to the bridge. You can pretend to be waiting for a car. I shall soon overtake you."

"But how am I to identify the man if I don't go into the house with you?"

"I wouldn't have you do that for anything. My idea is to get the man in position for you to see him without being seen."

"Can you do it?"

"I can try. I don't expect to do it on the instant. We have only just begun work here."

"All right, Mr. Brady, I'll do just as you say," replied Dora, and she walked on.

Now it was one of Old King Brady's life rules when in doubt as to what to do to just go right on and do the first thing that popped into his head.

Harry always acted on the same plan.

He had not the least idea what to do in this case.

But there was one thing which he was determined not to do, and that was to permit Dora to show herself to Mr. Manister in his company until he was sure that he had or had not struck the right man.

Entering the office of the bone yard Young King Brady found a very civil young man in charge.

"Can't you tell me where Mr. Manister lives?" he asked.

"Why, yes; he lives in that house up on the hill there," was the reply.

"I want to be sure that it is the same man I am looking for. What's his business, do you know?"

"What's yours? Are you a detective?" asked the young man.

Young King Brady was greatly annoyed, but he took pains not to show it.

Should he answer yes or no?

His judgment told him that the latter answer would be the proper one, and he was disgusted with himself when without understanding why he did it he obeyed a sudden impulse and answered yes.

"I thought so," chuckled the clerk of the bone yard. "I've been expecting a detective would be around here inquiring about Manister one of these days."

"Why?"

"Oh, because of the way he acts."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, he's a queer bird. He lives all alone in that house, and has been there two years at least, that's what people think, but I know better. I know there are other people there."

"Hello!" exclaimed Harry, "Mr. Manister is a mystery, is he?"

"You bet he is. Nobody knows anything about him. You asked me what his business was. I couldn't tell you if I died for it. Some say he's a lawyer, others say he's a real estate speculator, others again will tell you that he's a traveling salesman. All they know is that he comes and goes just as it suits him. Sometimes he won't show himself for days together, and yet people know he is in the house all the while. Then again he'll go away every morning and come back every night for a week or two. He's been known to go away and stay away for weeks together, and then all at once turn up again. That's the sort of man Mr. Manister is. I've been expecting to see the detectives after him this long while."

"Then take it altogether this man Manister is a first-class mystery," repeated Harry, who had been listening with intense interest to all this.

He saw now that he had made no mistake in confessing his true occupation, and he hastened to put another question to the clerk.

"Do you think he is a crook?"

"I'm dead sure of it," replied the young man, emphatically.

"I suspect," replied Harry, "that I'm up against what you know personally now."

"That's what you are."

"Do you mind telling me what it is?"

"Not at all. I was just going to do it anyhow."

"One question more before you begin, is Mr. Manister at home just now?"

"Yes. I saw him go past here not an hour ago. Of course I can't positively say that he went to the house, but I have no doubt he did."

"Go on," said Harry, "I'm most anxious to hear what you've got to say."

"Why, it is just like this," continued the clerk. "There's a woman in that house, although no one ever sees her. I've seen her, though. I worked late here on my books the other night, and as I was passing the house on my way across lots over to Bushwick Avenue I saw her open the door and let in three men, and I've seen the same men go in there late at night twice before."

"Hello!" cried Harry, "that knocks the theory that Manister lives there alone pretty well in the head. I should say. What sort of a woman was she, young or old?"

"Old. Sixty, at least."

"That's all?"

"Yes. I would like to know——"

"Wait a moment. I'm going to describe the man I'm after. I want to see whether my description fits Manister or not."

Young King Brady then went ahead and described the man who had made his way into the Akerman house the

night before, following Old King Brady's description closely.

"That's the man," said the clerk of the bone yard. You have described Manister to a dot. May I ask my question now?"

"Certainly," replied Harry, well satisfied what the question was to be.

"What are you driving at? What do you suspect Manister of?"

"Now that is something that I can't tell you," smiled Young King Brady, "for I hardly know myself."

Of course the clerk was disappointed, and Harry got out of the office as soon as he could.

He had now determined to interview Mr. Manister if possible, first posting Dora in some position in the lots where she could see the man when he came to the door.

It was a simple plan, but simple plans are often those which work out the best.

As Harry hurried on over the lots he could see the girl walking rapidly away from the house.

"Strange! What's her hurry?" the detective thought.

He pressed forward and passed the house, glancing up at it as he did so.

The blinds were all closed from the basement up. There was no sign of life about the place.

Just then the girl ahead of him turned and looked back, and Young King Brady saw Dora's face as he expected.

Then to his astonishment the girl broke into a run and flew on across the lots toward Meeker Avenue just as though she was afraid.

"What in the world is the matter with her?" thought Young King Brady, and he ran too.

The girl looking back saw him coming and ran all the faster.

"Is she trying to shake me?" thought the detective. "Have I been fooled?"

He wasted no time now, but ran for all he was worth, catching up with the girl on Meeker Avenue just as she passed out of the lots.

She heard him coming and stopped, turned and faced him.

"Why, what is the matter with you?" panted Harry.

"Who are you? What do you want with me?" gasped the girl.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WOMAN AROUND THE CORNER.

After Old King Brady left the photograph gallery he went back to the Fifth Avenue mansion which had been the scene of the mysterious crime, for it was another of the detective's rules to stick to the place where the mystery upon which he was working transpired until he could find some reason for going away.

He had found no reason as yet.

Such clues as he had been able to lay his hand upon did not lead him further than the cellar in the vacant lot around the corner.

And yet they were actual clues.

The two Bradys had accomplished more in one night than all the rest of the detectives who had tried their hand on the case had been able to do since the murder occurred.

"I've got to know more about that house before I can go any further," thought Old King Brady. "I shall have to tackle the neighbors, I suppose."

It was commonplace business which the detective did not like very much.

More than that he knew that it was all old ground which had been gone over by those who had preceded him on the case.

Still Old King Brady went right at it, and the first person he interviewed was the butler of old Mrs. Livingston's house, the next door below Mr. Akerman's.

The detective went to the basement door and knocked modestly.

"I want to see the butler," he said.

"That will be Mr. Kelly," said the girl who opened the door.

"Yes."

"What did you want? Mr. Kelly don't like to be called down to the door for everything."

"Oh, tell him I am a detective. The chief of police sent me here," was the reply, for Old King Brady felt that he had no time to waste in beating about the bush.

He was shown into the basement, and in a few moments a fat, prosperous Irishman appeared.

He looked the rich man's servant from head to foot, and Old King Brady knew just how to take him.

"Yes, the chief of police was right!" he exclaimed. "By gracious, he was right. How do you do, sir? How do you do?"

"Well, I'm fine. What did you want? What do you mean about the chief?" the butler replied.

"What do I mean? Why, the chief said to me that man Kelly at Mrs. Livingston's is the brightest one our boys have had to tackle. If you want any information go to Kelly, he's your man."

"And he may well say that," chuckled the butler.

"Of course I saw what sort of a man you were, Kelly, as soon as I set my eyes on you."

"I've been doing nothing but talk to detectives for the last three days. Sure, what is it you want of me?"

"Just to ask a few questions."

"Are you a detective?"

"I am."

"Mebbe it's Old King Brady you are. I think I've seen your face in the papers."

"That's me. It's your picture that ought to be in the papers, Kelly, and it will be if I can get it there."

"Do you think you could now, Mr. Brady?"

"Why not?"

"Sure, they say you can do everything. But fire away. If there's anything I know about the murder I'll tell it."

Old King Brady had got his man just where he wanted him now, and he went right to work.

Questions came to Mr. Kelly no more rapidly than his slow-moving mind was able to grasp.

The sum and substance of what Mr. Kelly told Old King Brady was this:

He had been butler at the Livingston house for three years.

During all that time he had never seen a single person save one ever enter Mr. Akerman's house or leave it except the proprietor himself.

This man, as described by Kelly, perfectly answered the description of the man who had tried to shoot Old King Brady in the library.

To make sure of this the detective showed the photograph, and Mr. Kelly immediately identified the man.

"That's him, boss," he declared. "That's him, sure."

He went on to say that this man did not often visit Mr. Akerman, and when he had seen him it was always in the day time, and he had just finished telling this when he suddenly remembered something else.

"Oh, now, Mr. Brady, here's a p'int that I never gave to no detective yet," he exclaimed. "I've just remembered it. Let me see, it was a year ago Patrick's day that I seen him sitting in the parlor of Akerman's, and I wondered what he was doing there, so I did."

"Who?" asked the detective.

"Just Mr. Cramer."

"Who is Mr. Cramer?"

"The Wall Street broker. He that lives in the first house round the corner, and a nice, quiet gentleman he is, so they say."

"Next house to the vacant lot?" asked Old King Brady, immediately interested.

And his interest was so great that when he got through with Mr. Kelly he started to interview the man around the corner, but as he feared would prove the case Mr. Cramer had already gone downtown.

The house was a fine four-story brownstone of the modern sort.

The detective upon inquiring for Mrs. Cramer was shown into an elegantly furnished library and kept waiting for some time before that lady appeared.

Then came a startling moment to both Old King Brady and the mistress of the house.

Mrs. Cramer was a tall, graceful woman of some fifty years or more.

She was dressed in an expensive morning gown, and as she sailed into the room with a queenly air Old King Brady arose to make his politest bow.

But he did not do anything of the sort.

Instead he stood like one transfixed and just stared while Mrs. Cramer, with face as white as a sheet, reeled back against the partition and would perhaps have fallen if she had not steadied herself with her hand.

"You!" she gasped. "You!"

Old King Brady instantly recovered himself.

"Yes," he said quietly. "I still live. Sit down. My business in this house has no reference to you."

Instead of sitting down Mrs. Cramer closed the door and took a hasty step forward.

"What is it? Tell me!" she panted. "Can't you let me alone? I am living a quiet, respectable life. I——"

"Stop!" interrupted Old King Brady. "Don't speak, for,

as they say, even the walls may have ears. I only came to this house to ask a little information about the murder case around on the avenue. As I told you before, my business has no reference whatever to you."

"And you will not tell——"

"Your husband? No. Certainly not."

"Thank you, Mr. Brady," she said, rushing into a chair.

"You were always a square man. I believe you. Go on."

"Mr. Cramer is your husband?" asked the detective with more embarrassment.

"Yes."

"How long have you been married to him?"

"Fifteen years."

"Ah! You must have married shortly after——"

"Yes."

"Is he rich?"

"Worth over a million."

"What's his business?"

"He's a Wall Street speculator. He deals only on his own account."

"Which is probably the reason I have never heard of him. Well, I congratulate you. You have done well."

"Is that all?"

"All about yourself."

"I am glad. Now your business?"

"To learn if Mr. Cramer had any acquaintance with Mr. Akerman."

"He had a slight acquaintance."

"He was in the habit of visiting him?"

"Yes, at times."

"What was the object of his visits, business or just neighborly calls?"

"The last. Mr. Akerman was interested in amateur photography, so is my husband. They met on that ground."

"They were always friendly?"

"Always. Ah, Mr. Brady, my husband is a good man. He has no suspicion of what I have been. Don't suspect him. Don't think of it. Go and see him at his office and have a talk with him. One look at his face will be enough to assure you of his innocence."

Old King Brady bowed.

"As for me you have a right to be suspicious, I own," continued the woman bitterly. "All I can do is to swear to you that I did not even know Peter Akerman. I have seen him in the street—that is all."

Old King Brady bowed again.

"Speak!" cried the woman, clasping her hands in agony. "Is my past life to be shown up to my husband—to the world? Am I to be made to suffer again for the folly of fifteen years ago? Do you suspect me, Mr. Brady? If you do speak out and tell me the worst."

Old King Brady arose and laid his hand with kindly touch upon her shoulder.

"Madam," he said quietly, "far be it from me to unlock the closet where you keep your family skeleton which has nothing to do with this case. But when you ask me about my suspicions I answer that when I am working on a case I suspect nobody and I suspect everybody; but the innocent need have no fear, for I try to be as just as well as an honest man."

Thus saying Old King Brady opened the door and walked out, immediately leaving the house.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BLIND MAN ON THE BRIDGE.

Probably there was never a more thoroughly astonished detective than Young King Brady when the Akerman girl turned upon him and demanded to know who he was.

Harry could scarcely believe his ears, and yet this surely was Dora Akerman.

There she stood before him in face and dress just as he had seen her last.

"What can you mean?" he asked. "Have your troubles driven you mad?"

"They might well have done so," moaned the girl. "Do not stop me, sir. I am in deep trouble; every instant is precious. I——"

"Miss Akerman! Do you mean to say that you do not know me? You speak to me as though I was a stranger. What does this mean?"

"You are a stranger to me. You know it. Stand aside, sir! Do not insult a helpless girl. Who told you my name?"

"A stranger to you! You are surely mad. Your troubles have turned your head. Think of your sister; think of what depends upon you! From what I have learned I have a strong suspicion that Teresa may be in that house."

The girl drew away and clapped her hands to her face.

"God help me! Am I going mad!" she cried. "Sir, I cannot imagine who you are, but I am Teresa Akerman, as you probably know very well."

Young King Brady stood dumbfounded.

"If you are Teresa Akerman then where is the other one?" he gasped.

"My sister? Do you mean Dora?" demanded the girl eagerly. "Oh, sir, who are you?"

Young King Brady had almost forgotten his own identity in his astonishment.

In this he was decidedly to blame, for a detective should remember himself at all times.

If it had been Old King Brady instead of Young King Brady the first thing he would have done upon making this startling discovery would have been to look behind him.

If Harry had taken the precaution to do so he would have seen a tall man wearing a checked suit standing on the higher ground of the vacant lots near the mysterious house.

He stood there very quietly and seemed to be watching the two figures on the avenue, which he could easily do, for save an old delapidated mansion on the hill at their left there was no house anywhere near.

When Young King Brady remembered himself and did look behind him the man had disappeared.

"Come," said Harry, continuing the conversation, "we are entirely at cross purposes. I am a detective. I came here with Dora Akerman. We were searching for her sister

Teresa. I left her for a moment, and when I followed you I supposed you were she. That's my case. Now what's yours?"

"My sister! You left her near that terrible house. Then they have captured her! They have made the same mistake you have made. They have taken her for me."

"That house over there in the lots?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean to say you have just escaped from there?"

"Yes."

"Amazing! Then you are really Teresa and not Dora?"

"I am."

"You have been a prisoner there?"

"Yes."

"How did it happen? Tell me all about it. We will walk down toward the bridge. We may be seen."

That was the time when Young King Brady looked back, too late to see that they were being watched, as we have said.

Harry was wild with anxiety about Dora, but common sense told him that he must learn this girl's story first.

Quietly he told his own story, explaining his position exactly.

His calm manner had the desired effect.

"Yes, I am the sister who went to Peter Akerman's in the carriage," Teresa said as the detective asked her again to tell him all. "You say there has been murder done and that my uncle is the victim. Well, if it is so I do not know it. When I reached the house I was shown into the room where my uncle sat. He did not recognize me, and insisted that I should prove to him that I was actually his niece, which I did, and——"

"Pardon me. You were alone with him?" asked Harry.

"Yes, sir. I was then."

"Ah! But not later. Go on."

"I'm coming to that. After my uncle became satisfied that I was really the person I claimed to be he began to talk about his wealth. 'I am a very rich man,' he said, 'and I am getting old. You and your sister are my only heirs. I desire to make a will leaving you my property. I don't want you here, and I don't intend to have you here, but I do mean that you shall have my money when I die.'"

"Did he say all this pleasantly?" interrupted Harry.

"Not very. He was cold and hard in his way of speaking."

"What next?"

"Why, then he asked me to let him take my photograph. You see Dora and I are twins, and, as you have discovered, we look exactly alike. He spoke of that and said that he meant to paste both our photographs in his will so that there need be no mistake. I stood up near the mantelpiece to be photographed, and just as he was about to snap the camera a man came bursting into the room."

"Ah!" exclaimed Harry. "We are getting at it now. That man was Mr. Manister?"

"Yes."

"What did he want? What did he say?"

"I can't tell you. Oh, he abused my uncle terribly. It was all about me. He said I should never be the heir, and unless I was willing to marry him, or my sister was, we should never handle a dollar of my uncle's money."

"What did your uncle say?"

"He seemed to be afraid of him. I wanted to go away, but he wouldn't let me. They went off into a corner and commenced to talk low. I ought to have tried to escape then, for right after that the trouble came."

"What trouble?"

"I'm going to tell you. 'Well, do it then, and we'll decide later,' I heard my uncle say, and he went to the table, opened a drawer and took out a small bottle."

"Yes, yes!" cried Harry, eagerly. "I guess you don't remember much more."

"You know then?"

"I know something and guess others. You were seized?"

"Yes. By this man Manister. He came up behind me suddenly and caught me by the throat. I thought he was going to leave the room, or I should have been better prepared."

"And then?"

"Then my uncle sprang forward and pressed the bottle under my nose. After that I remember nothing until I found myself a prisoner in a small dark room."

"Where? In that house?"

"My uncle's house? No. The house over there in the lots."

"It is what I meant; I thought as much. You have been there ever since?"

"Yes."

"How did you escape?"

"There was an old woman there—a horrible old creature who was always drunk. She came into the room to bring me food, and in going out she forgot to lock the door; she was too drunk to know what she was doing. I discovered how the case stood, and putting on my hat and jacket managed to get out into the back yard; then I climbed over the fence and——"

"And met me. I understand. Did you see anything of this man Manister while you were there?"

"I saw him every day. He used to come into the room and try to persuade me to marry him. He promised that if I would that all my uncle's wealth should be mine."

"And your sister?"

"He would not talk about her. He would not say what was to become of her."

"And this is all you have to tell?"

"All; but oh, how I suffered there! You have no idea."

"I can imagine; but tell me, did you know nothing of the murder of your uncle until you met me?"

"Nothing. Oh, don't let us go any further. Do you think my sister has been captured and taken into that house?"

"I'm afraid it is so," replied Harry. "Probably they discovered your escape and ran out in front. Seeing her walking up and down there waiting for me they mistook her for you."

"What's to be done?"

"If I could only see a policeman I'd decide quick enough, but I don't suppose it is any use to look for one here."

"But we must do something, sir."

"We must take care of you first of all. Can you trust me?"

"I must. How can I help it? I'm as helpless as a child."

"Then take the next car to the Grand Street Ferry and go straight home and leave all to me."

At first Miss Akerman utterly refused to listen to this proposition.

Harry labored with her, however, and she consented at last.

Harry put her on a Meeker Avenue car and promised to bring Dora to Bank Street or send word how the case stood before an hour had passed.

It was a simple move, and it was also a wise one, for it untied Young King Brady's hands and left him free to act.

He could hardly realize the strangeness of his position when he found himself alone by the car stand.

Teresa Akerman found Dora missing?

It seemed just incredible, and yet this was the situation which he had to face.

There was a policeman at the bridge, and to him Harry now appealed, telling as much of his story as was absolutely necessary, but no more.

Of course he showed his shield and told his name.

This acted like magic, for even in this remote part of Brooklyn the name of Brady commanded every respect.

"Sure we've suspected that house this long time," said the officer, "and that man Manister I've had my eye on him. He's no good."

"Can't we go directly to the house and demand the girl?" asked Harry.

"I suppose I ought to have help," said the officer, "but as you say, boss, there's no time for that. Come, we'll go together. We ought to be good for one man and an ould woman, that's sure."

They hurried along the bank of the creek and were just about to turn around by the big fence at the bone yard when the policeman chanced to look back.

"There he is now!" he exclaimed. "That's Manister just going on the bridge."

A tall man wearing a high hat and a checked suit had just started to cross to Blissville.

Harry saw him and recognized the fact that the man fully answered the description given by Old King Brady.

"He's our game. We must get him," he said.

"That's what we will!" shouted the policeman. "Run or they'll turn the bridge on you before you can get there. I'll be wid yer in no time if you're not afraid to tackle him alone."

Young King Brady did not even wait to answer.

The distance was not great, and he did not despair of getting across the bridge before the man could get very far away.

Now Harry could run like a deer, but the policeman was short and fat and could not run "for a cent," as the boys say.

To make matters worse, before he had gone a dozen yards he stumbled over a stone, turned his ankle, and went down all in a heap.

And as this ends our connection with this particular specimen of the "finest" we propose to let him get out of his scrape the best way he can.

It is to be hoped that he soon recovered from his sprained ankle, but whether he did or not we really don't know.

Meanwhile Young King Brady reached the bridge just as the whistle blew.

This was the signal that the bridge was about to be turned to let a vessel through.

For Young King Brady to miss connections now would be fatal to his plans, and he consequently ran for all he was worth.

His haste attracted no attention whatever.

At all hours, day and night, men are constantly running to catch the Meeker Avenue Bridge when it is on the turn.

The bridge tender saw him coming but seemed disposed not to wait, for they were already getting the big iron lever in place—it was before the time when they began to turn this bridge by steam.

As he drew near Young King Brady saw a man apparently blind go rapping his way on to the bridge with a cane.

A moment later and he had set foot on the bridge himself.

He hurried past the blind man, but before he was half-way across the bridge began to turn.

Young King Brady was furious.

If he had not been breathless he very likely would have "said things" to the bridge tender which would have done no good, of course, for in those days these men used to take particular delight in catching people on the bridge.

They had caught Young King Brady all right, and he stopped running at once.

Leaning against the railing he looked down into the black, foul smelling water of Newtown Creek, panting, for his breath was all gone now.

Nobody paid any attention to him.

The bridge tenders were running around with their lever, laughing and joking as they went.

Coming up behind him Harry could hear the blind man rapping his way along.

He did not look around, for he was trying to catch a glimpse of Mr. Manister on the other side.

It would have been better if he had been more careful, but Young King Brady never dreamed of danger then, and there he stood waiting for the blind man to pass when all at once he felt his legs clutched by two hands with a vice-like grip.

Before Young King Brady could make a move or even utter a cry he was raised bodily and pushed headlong over the rail.

Down he went flying, and a second later the dark waters of Newtown Creek closed above his head.

CHAPTER VIII.

OLD KING BRADY STRIKES A CLEW WHICH AMOUNTS TO SOMETHING AT LAST.

Rather shaken up by his encounter with Mrs. Cramer, Old King Brady crossed over to Third Avenue and walked down several blocks, smoking and thinking.

"Well, I'll see the husband anyhow," he muttered at last,

throwing away his cigar as he came to one of the elevated stations.

He went upstairs, boarded the train, and was whirled away down town.

Mr. Cramer's offices were in the Mills Building on Broad Street.

They were spacious and elegantly furnished, but the detective could only look at them, for he was headed off by a gentlemanly clerk at the door.

Did he wish to see Mr. Cramer?

Yes, he did.

Well, Mr. Cramer was engaged, couldn't he send in his card?

Of course he could, and of course he did, and, equally of course, Mr. Cramer sent out word to admit him.

There are few business men in New York who would care to refuse Old King Brady an audience at any time.

The great detective is altogether too important a man.

"Did you wish to see me, sir?" asked Mr. Cramer, elevating his eyebrows with an air of surprise.

He was a little man, very mild in his way of speaking.

Old King Brady observed that he was faultlessly dressed and had a soft, sleek, "pussy-cat" look.

Altogether Mr. Cramer appeared like just the last man in the world to be the husband of the fierce creature whom the detective had left in the house uptown.

Old King Brady immediately introduced himself as a detective engaged on the great Akerman murder case.

"I've come to you, sir, for a little information," he said.

"Oh, yes; just so," replied Mr. Cramer in his sleek way. "Most happy, Mr. Brady, to give you any information in my power, but what in the world ever put it into your head that I might know anything about the affair?"

"Because you were in the habit of visiting the deceased, sir."

"Well, yes; I was, but——"

"Sir?"

"I did not say anything."

"I thought you were about to finish your sentence."

"It was not worth finishing. I was about to add that I know little or nothing about the deceased."

"May I ask you a few questions?"

"Certainly, certainly. My time is valuable, however. Be as brief as you can."

"When did you first get acquainted with Mr. Akerman?"

"I think it was last July."

"How did your acquaintance begin?"

"I made him an offer for the lots which adjoin my house."

"Ah! He owned those lots, then?"

"Yes."

"Did he sell to you?"

"No; he refused to sell."

"He was very wealthy, I believe?"

"So they say. I don't know anything about it."

"Did he never talk to you about his business?"

"Never."

"You visited him several times afterward?"

"Oh, yes."

"Why?"

"He was interested in amateur photography; so was I. We got talking about it."

"Did you go out taking pictures together?"

"Never! It wasn't that way at all."

"What, then?"

"Why, you see Akerman had invented a new method of taking detail views by lamp light under long exposure."

"Indeed."

"Yes."

"Indoor views, you mean?"

"Certainly."

"And what then?"

"Oh, he was always talking about patenting the process, and he asked my advice about it. We discussed the various methods of infringement which were likely to come up."

"So as to be able to head the infringers off by patenting those methods?"

"Yes."

"Did he ever take out any patents?"

"Not that I know of. As I said, he was always talking about it, but I never knew him to go any further, still he might have done so easily enough without my knowledge."

"Now to change the subject, Mr. Cramer. What do you know of Mr. Akerman's past life?"

"Nothing whatever."

"Nor how he made his money?"

"No."

"Did you ever meet any one at his house?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

"Once there was a strange man there. I was not introduced to him, and he went right away."

"You don't know who he was then?"

"No."

"Who else did you meet?"

"There was a man whom I met there several times named Manister."

"Ah! I am interested in this. Who was he?"

"I'm sure I couldn't tell you."

"What was his business?"

"I don't know that either. I never had much talk with him. When I called he always excused himself and went into another room."

"Should you know him if you were to see him?"

"Certainly."

"Should you recognize his photograph if I were to show it to you?"

"Yes."

"How about this?"

Old King Brady produced his photograph.

It seemed to him then that he had struck a clew worth having.

He was sure of it when Mr. Cramer exclaimed:

"Yes; that's the man."

"Good!" said Old King Brady. "You have told me precisely what I wish to know, Mr. Cramer."

"Do you suspect this man of the murder?"

"Impossible for me to say. I am looking for persons who were acquainted with Mr. Akerman. To-day I have

found one in you, and I shall have another when you tell me where I can lay my hand on this man Manister."

"Which I can't do, Mr. Brady. I know nothing of the man at all."

"Then I shall have to look him up. Pardon me if I keep you a minute more. When was the last time you saw Mr. Akerman alive?"

"About two weeks ago."

"You called at his house then?"

"No. I met him on the street."

"That is all."

"But about this picture," said Mr. Cramer. "I see it was taken in Mr. Akerman's library."

"Yes."

"There is a lady in it; who is she?"

"I cannot say."

"Manister looks angry."

"He evidently does."

"How did you come by the picture?"

Strange how a little thing will sometimes change the whole current of affairs.

If Mr. Cramer desired to keep up his reputation as a truthful man he had better have allowed Old King Brady to go when he started.

Before the detective could reply to the question about the picture an office boy stepped into the room with a telegram.

"Pardon me a moment," said Mr. Cramer, and he tore open the dispatch and hastily read it.

"Well, you were saying, Mr. Brady," he said, crumpling it up and thrusting it into his pocket.

Old King Brady went right on to tell about the discovery of the picture.

No one ever would have dreamed that he had found another clew, and yet such was the case.

He knew now that Mr. Cramer had not told him the whole truth about his relation with Peter Akerman, and this was the way he found out.

Directly behind the broker hung a small plate glass mirror.

Old King Brady as he sat faced the broker.

When he held up the telegram it was distinctly reflected in the mirror.

Sharp as a needle, and on the alert at all times, Old King Brady knew that such would be the case.

While one eye was kept upon the broker the other took in the mirror and read the telegram.

"Akerman shares sold at eighty-two" was the reading of the dispatch.

Old King Brady immediately followed up his advantage.

"By the way, Mr. Cramer, did you ever transact any business for Mr. Akerman?" he asked.

"Never," was the prompt reply.

"Well, I understood that you had done so."

"No. Whoever told you that was certainly romancing, my dear sir."

"Just so," said the detective. "Well, I'm much obliged to you. Pleased to have made your acquaintance. Good day."

Old King Brady left the office and hurried to a noted broker's office on Wall Street.

We prefer not to give the name of this firm, as Old King Brady has specially requested us not to do so.

One important thing we may say about them, however.

Their name was signed to the dispatch.

Now it happened that Old King Brady knew the senior partner of this firm well.

Once in a while the old detective takes a flyer in stocks.

As a rule he has been very successful, and he thinks that he owes his success in a great measure to the pains taken by the head of this firm.

Under these circumstances it is hardly necessary to say that Old King Brady was very cordially received.

The broker took him directly into his private office and closed the door.

"Well, Brady, what is it to-day?" he asked. "I can put you on to a good thing if you want to go into the market."

"No," replied Old King Brady. "I'm not going into the market to-day. I'm after a little information which I feel sure you can give me, that's all."

"I will if I can, you may bank on that."

"I'm not so sure. It involves the betrayal of a customer's confidence."

"You hit me hard there, Brady. I needn't tell you that it's something I never do."

"I'm sure of that, but to aid the law in the cause of justice."

"Well, that's different. Do you mean to tell me that one of your famous clews points this way?"

"I do."

"Well, I'm sorry for it."

"Can't you guess what it is?"

"I think I can."

Old King Brady was silent for some time.

The broker was silent too. He seemed to be thinking, and the detective let him think.

"Have I got to do it, Brady?" he asked at last.

"I could force you to if I tried."

"Well, I won't put you to that trouble. You refer to the Akerman shares we have just been selling, of course."

"I do."

"I thought there would be trouble. I told my partner so, but by thunder you are prompt. It isn't half an hour since they were sold."

"Are they delivered yet?"

"No."

"Then they are still in your office?"

"Yes."

"Cancel the sale at once. I've been finding clews ever since I began on this case. I think I've found one that amounts to something now."

"Yes, but it don't point to Cramer," said the broker, emphatically. "Come, Brady, I know there is no use beating about the bush."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, although you haven't told me so, I know very well that you must know who it was that put those shares into our hands to sell."

"Yes, I know that."

"I can't imagine where you found it out."

"In Cramer's office, if you want to know."

"I'm glad to hear you say so. Of course he told you himself. Cramer is a square man."

"Yes, but he didn't tell me himself."

"No?"

"No."

"How did you find out then?"

"That I cannot tell you, but there is something you can tell me."

"What?"

"How did Mr. Cramer come into possession of those shares?"

"Why, he bought them of Mr. Akerman."

"Bought them?"

"So he says."

"Well, he just told me that he never had any business with Mr. Akerman."

"What?"

"You heard me."

"Phew! Somebody lies!" cried the broker. "Why, we've been buying and selling stocks on Peter Akerman's account through Cramer for the last two years."

"There!" cried Old King Brady, springing up. "I know that I have struck a clew that amounts to something now."

CHAPTER IX.

SECRETS OUT AT LAST.

If the "blind man" thought he had done for Young King Brady simply by throwing him into the water he certainly was most mightily mistaken.

It was, in fact, as big a mistake as to fancy that the fellow was blind at all.

If the bridge tenders had been watching the fellow they would have seen him flash one quick look over the rail to see if the detective rose again.

But there was no sign of Young King Brady in the muddy water of the creek.

The "blind man" immediately rapped his way along to the end of the bridge and quietly waited for it to close.

Nothing of all this was seen by the bridge tenders, who were interested only upon their own affairs.

Nor did the "blind man" see the detective again, although he looked down into the water more than once.

When the bridge finally closed he rapped his way up the street, turned down the tracks of the Long Island Railroad, and disappeared.

Blind this man certainly was not, for he could have seen the struggle in the water if there had been one.

Still his sight was very much impaired, and he could see nothing distinctly.

This we state on account of what happened later on.

Returning to Young King Brady we may state right here that he was a famous swimmer.

He was also a fellow who at all times was able to keep his wits about him.

Even as he fell Young King Brady's mind was active, and he felt no fear.

"It's a game to do me," he thought. "Dora's safety depends upon my coolness now."

So he let himself go, and when he struck the water he struck out under it and came up under the bridge.

This was just what he wanted.

No one could see him now.

Harry kept up a moment to get his breath and to listen.

He wanted to hear if anyone was calling out on the bridge.

He could hear nothing of the sort.

There was no excitement of any kind.

Presently the bridge began to close and Young King Brady swam ashore.

He came against the timber which lines the banks of Newtown Creek at a point where stood a small building enclosed by a high fence.

There was the foundation of an old factory within the enclosure.

Evidently it had been destroyed by fire and the little building was the office.

Harry climbed up and hurried over to it.

The day was decidedly cool and his teeth chattered and there were cold chills running down his back.

"I shall get my death if I don't change my clothes," thought Young King Brady. "I wonder what's in here?"

The office windows were all concealed behind heavy wooden shutters, and the door was locked.

This, however, did not interfere with Young King Brady a bit, for he was able to open the door with one of his skeleton keys.

The office consisted of two rooms, both furnished with desks, tables and chairs.

The place, although very dirty, had the air of having been recently occupied.

Harry pushed around in the dim light examining everything.

Among other things he discovered a closet in the inner room which he proceeded to open.

"Well, upon my word, this is luck!" he exclaimed as he looked in. "I'll borrow some of these things now and settle with the owner later on."

The closet was full of clothes. It seemed to be a wardrobe used by more than one man, for the clothes were of different sizes. The lock which fastened it was a complicated one, too, but Harry's skeleton keys had been good for it and here he was with just what he needed ready at hand.

Of course Young King Brady was not long in availing himself of this valuable find.

He stripped and dressed himself in the best suit in the closet.

There were shirts and underclothes and stockings there too.

It was a perfect godsend to the detective.

In less than ten minutes he was ready for business, and he hit it just right, too, for at that moment he heard a noise in the yard.

Looking out of the window he saw the blind man coming

along with his cane, not rapping now, but using his stick just as any one else would.

"By Jove, I'm in for it," thought Young King Brady. "What am I to do?"

He determined not to retreat, for he was most anxious to learn more about this man.

Then he thought of the closet.

It seemed to be just the place to hide in, but before doing so Young King Brady unfastened one of the windows in the rear office and slipped the catch on the shutters, thus leaving himself a chance to retreat.

He then slipped into the closet and closed the door.

He was none too soon.

In a moment the blind man entered the outer office.

He opened the door of the inner room which Harry had taken the precaution to close, but did not come in.

The detective listened.

He could hear the fellow fumbling about at the big desk, opening and shutting drawers and making considerable noise.

Harry would have liked to see what he was doing, but he did not dare to leave his closet, and it was just as well he didn't, for in a moment the blind man called out:

"Come on, Manister, I fixed him; the coast is clear."

"Did you?" chuckled Young King Brady, laying his hand on his revolver. "It looks as if I were going to hear something. There's music in the air."

What he heard first was a man entering the office.

"Well, Decker, what did you do with him?" was asked.

"What did I do with him? Why, I tipped him over into the creek," was the reply.

"Was he drowned?"

"I hope so. I heard no cry; there didn't seem to be any struggle in the water."

"Were you seen?"

"No, no! I took good care of that."

"I don't believe you know anything about it. You couldn't see if a dozen men were watching you."

"Yes, I could."

"No, you couldn't. Never mind, though. You did well. By gracious, I never had such a scare in my life."

"Who was he?"

"I told you before he was Young King Brady."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive."

"It's coming pretty close when the detectives get to watching the house. Next thing they will be here. You'd better let the girl go."

"Confound it, Decker, she's gone. The one we captured in the street wasn't Teresa Akerman at all. It was her sister Dora. We made a deuce of a mistake."

"What! What!"

"Oh, I didn't have time to tell you all. Young Brady got the girl and I saw him send her off on the car."

"And the sister?"

"Oh, she's in the house. After I dragged her in and found out the mistake I had made I locked her up. I'd have let her go if I'd dared, but you see I didn't. I must have time to think."

"To blazes with those girls, anyhow! There's been trouble ever since you began with them."

"I know it."

"Everything was going so well before——"

"Before this confounded murder. That's what's put the kybosh on our business, and it's done it for fair."

"Do you think you are suspected?"

"I'm sure the Bradys suspect me now."

"You ought never to have attacked Old King Brady."

"I know it. I did it on the spur of the moment. It was a mistake. If the truth ever comes out I shall be suspected of this murder, although you know as well as I do that I'm as innocent of it as a child."

"Why don't you light out?"

"Do you know that's just what I am thinking? I can get away for a time till it blows over. If I could only find the will and destroy it I'd go in a hurry, but I don't like to leave it behind me and let those girls inherit all."

"You've given up the notion of marrying one of them, then?"

"Oh, yes. I've soured on that. It would be no use now. It was a foolish piece of business anyhow. If I had not been half full at the time I never should have interfered with the girl that night."

Here was an interesting conversation.

Here were secrets to which Young King Brady listened with intense interest.

He slipped out of the closet and got a good view of Mr. Manister, through the crack of the door.

While he was watching and listening the conversation suddenly changed.

"I'm going right back to the house," said Manister, "and I may conclude to close the place and let the Akerman girl go."

"If you do drug her," said Decker, "let her wander about half dazed and be arrested. Give her a good dose. No one will believe her story then."

"It's a good idea, and I'll think about it. Now to business. We've got to get into that house to-night."

"We have. Those plates of the old man must be found."

"But what about the police and the detectives?"

"They must be drugged. We've got to have an hour at least for the search; besides, the plates there is the will."

"You are determined to go?"

"Yes."

"What time shall I meet you?"

"Let it be midnight, opposite Cramer's house."

"I'll be there. You don't think the detectives know of the secret passage?"

"I'm sure they don't."

"Say, Manister, who do you think really did murder the old man?"

"Decker, I have no more idea than you have. It's a complete mystery to me."

"He had no enemies?"

"None that I know of, nor any friends either, except Cramer."

"You know this man Cramer?"

"I've met him in the old man's house."

"What kind of a fellow is he?"

"Harmless. As quiet a man as you ever saw."

"You don't think he could have done it?"

"The idea is ridiculous. He and the old man were on the best of terms. Cramer transacted all his business for him. Besides, he isn't at all the kind of man to do such a thing. He wouldn't harm a fly."

"Huh!" growled the blind man. "It's your quiet kind that are the worst sometimes. Well, here's the plates. You better take them away with you."

"No, sir!"

"Why not? It's my opinion that the old ranch will be raided before the day is over."

"Mine, too, and that's why I told you to have them ready."

"Then why in thunder don't you take them? Do you expect me to run the risk?"

"No, for I know very well you wouldn't do it, and if you tried it you would surely be caught. I've fixed all that, Decker."

"How?"

"A man will call here for the bundle in a few minutes."

"A man? What man?"

"Never mind his name. He's a new fellow I'm going to introduce to the gang. He was at the house last night and understands just how the cat jumps. I've sent him word to come here. Stay till he comes and give him the bundle; he'll do the rest."

"But how shall I know him?"

"He'll give three knocks on the gate, and when you open he'll say 'Newtown.'"

"I don't like the idea, Manister, but I suppose I've got to obey orders. After I've given up the bundle what then?"

"Go home and stay there and don't show yourself for a week."

Here it ended.

Having made these final remarks Mr. Manister left the office.

Young King Brady, feeling that he had been doing good work, left, too, as Decker followed Manister to the gate.

But Harry was too shrewd to leave by the door.

Instead of that he tried the window, and with a good deal of trouble managed to scale the fence.

He ran around to the front and saw Manister making for the bridge.

"I hope the cop may get him," thought Harry, "but I don't suppose there is any chance of it; he must have gone back on me or I should have heard from him before this."

He hesitated for a moment and then walked boldly up to the gate and struck hard upon it three times.

"Who's there? What's wanted?" Decker's voice asked after a moment.

"Newtown," replied Harry boldly.

He could hear the key turning in the lock of the gate.

What would come of it?

Young King Brady knew very well that what he had overheard all pointed in one direction.

Manister & Co. were simply a gang of counterfeiters.

As for Decker, Harry never doubted that he was a desperate man and quite capable of committing any crime.

CHAPTER X.

A BOLD GAME.

Old King Brady immediately left the broker's office and went in a hack to police headquarters.

"I want more time on the Akerman case," he said. "I have made important discoveries. I can't finish to-night."

The request was granted.

The inspector showed the greatest curiosity to find out the nature of Old King Brady's discoveries, but the detective would not say a word.

He hurried back to the Akerman house and went through the rooms alone.

What he did then Officer McMahon did not know, but we may as well state right here that it was to search again for private papers which took the detective back.

Every drawer and closet was ransacked, but nothing was discovered.

Old King Brady was not surprised at this, for the ground had all been gone over before by the detectives who had preceded him.

Old King Brady had been in hopes that he might be more successful than the rest.

He was just about to give it up when it occurred to him to examine the drawer of the table in the library once more.

He was in the act of doing this when the officer came to him and said that there was a man outside who had asked to see him.

"I told him that I did not think you were in the house," added McMahon, "but he insisted and I said I'd make sure."

"Show him in," said Old King Brady.

He was just about to close the door when his eyes lighted on a little red memorandum book which had been concealed under some papers in a corner.

He had no more than opened it than he closed it again and thrust it into his pocket with a triumphant air.

He had found it at last.

Here was a record of Mr. Akerman's stock transactions, and the name of Cramer occurred in it many times.

"Another clew," thought the detective as a tall, gray-haired gentleman, faultlessly dressed in the latest fashion, entered the room.

As soon as Old King Brady set eyes upon him he felt sure that he had seen this man's face somewhere before.

But where he could not remember.

He bowed and asked the visitor his business and name.

"My name is Edmands," was the reply in a high-pitched voice. "I heard you had taken hold of this case here, and as I happen to know something about it I thought I would take the liberty of calling on you."

"What do you know?" the detective asked.

"Why, I live further down the block," said Mr. Edmands, "and I happened to be on my way home on the night of the murder just about the time I am told it is supposed the crime was committed."

"Yes. Well?"

"Well, sir, it may amount to nothing, but as I was passing

Mr. Cramer's house I suddenly heard a slight noise behind me, and looking back saw two men coming up out of the cellar in the vacant lot."

"Indeed! This is important. Why didn't you inform the police before?"

"Because I was obliged to go out of town and have just returned. I got back only this morning, and hearing that you were on the case I thought I would tell you."

"Who told you I was working on the case?"

"My friend, Mr. Cramer, the Wall Street broker."

"Ah! When did you see Mr. Cramer?"

"Not an hour ago. I have just come from his office, in fact. He said that I would probably find you here."

"Indeed? Well, he was right. Here I am, and I'm much obliged to you, sir."

"Oh, but I have not told all yet," continued the stranger.

"One of these men as they passed me was speaking of the murder unless I am very much mistaken."

"Ah! this grows interesting. What did he say?"

"He said 'the old man died hard, didn't he?'"

"Did you hear that?"

"I did."

"What was the answer?"

"The other replied: 'Yes, he did. It's a bad job. I didn't mean to do it.' Then they must have got the idea that I was listening, for they stopped talking and hurried on."

"Is that all?"

"No."

"What more?"

"Why, as they passed me one of them took out his pocket-book and handed the other some money. As he did so this dropped on the sidewalk and I picked it up."

Thereupon Mr. Edmands took out a business card and handed it to Old King Brady.

"Metropolitan Hall, No. — James Street," was the way it read.

"Do you know the place?" asked Mr. Edmands.

"No," answered the detective.

"I think it would be well for you to go there with me."

"Why?"

"I would identify those men if they happened to be there."

"You could?"

"Yes."

"Did they look like men who would be likely to frequent such a place?"

"Yes; they certainly did."

"I suppose you would like to have me go with you now, Mr. Edmands?"

"Well, my carriage is at the door, sir. It is at your service if you wish to go, and as I have nothing special to do this afternoon I could go with you just as well as not."

The old detective rose and paced the floor.

"I should like to have you tell this story to a friend of mine first," he said.

"But why?"

"Simply because he knows all the crooks of New York. He might be able to identify these men."

"I have no objection to that. Where is your friend?"

"At police headquarters in Mulberry Street."

"Ah! The Central Office, as they call it."

"Yes."

"I'll go there with you."

"Very well," said the detective; "then we will go now."

He left the house and followed Mr. Edmands to his carriage.

It was a handsome affair, and looked to belong to some rich man.

As they rode along Mr. Edmands, in his high-pitched voice, talked about the murder and about the old detective's reputation.

Indeed, he talked incessantly.

Old King Brady, on the other hand, said but little in reply.

The ride downtown was soon accomplished.

"Where have I seen this man before?" the detective kept saying to himself.

That Mr. Edmands was not altogether a stranger to him he felt certain, and yet he could not place him.

The old detective suspected a trick from the start, and he was fully on the alert.

But his suspicions in a measure died away as they turned into the Bowery and drew near the Central Office of the police.

His hand, which had been constantly on his revolver, was now released, and he began to ask himself if this man was not sincere after all, when suddenly Mr. Edmands caught his arm.

"There! There is the man who dropped the card now!" he exclaimed, pointing over to the sidewalk.

"Where?" asked the detective as innocently as possible.

He suspected what was coming now.

He was perfectly prepared for the ether saturated handkerchief which was suddenly clapped to his nose, while an arm thrown about his neck held his head back.

He struggled and then his head dropped.

"Done!" breathed the man, tapping on the glass as a signal for the driver.

But it was not done in just the fashion that he thought it was.

Although Old King Brady lay like a man fully under the influence of ether he was very far from being that.

On the contrary, he knew everything that was transpiring.

The reason was simple.

The shrewd old detective, anticipating just some such bold game as this, had taken the precaution to prepare himself before leaving the house.

Both nostrils were carefully plugged with cotton, and when the handkerchief went over his mouth he took care to keep it shut.

In short, the foxy old detective was only shamming.

"Let her do her worst," he thought. "I'm ready for her. This case is beginning to grow interesting now."

"Her?"

What did Old King Brady mean?

CHAPTER XI.

YOUNG KING BRADY HAS ANOTHER SURPRISE.

It was a bold move on Young King Brady's part to go right back and run the risk of Mr. Decker recognizing his own clothes, if indeed they belonged to him.

Still he had watched the man closely enough to be satisfied that he was almost half blind, so he gave the password without much fear.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" growled Decker. "Did you meet the boss?"

"Yes," replied Harry. He told me to come right ahead and get the plates. He said the detectives were sharp on our track."

"Our track," growled Decker, completely deceived.

"You talk as if you were one of us, young man."

"Well, so I am."

"You're too fresh. If it was me I wouldn't trust you with the plates," said Decker, leading the way into the office.

He had peered closely at the detective, but he did not recognize him as any one he had ever seen before.

Opening a drawer in the desk he took out a long, flat package.

"Huh! There's queer in this as well as plates," Harry said.

"Never you mind what's in it, you just do as you are told," said Decker.

Seeing that there was no chance to gain the fellow's confidence Harry hurried away.

He went straight to the bone yard and took the clerk into his confidence.

Together they opened the package, and sure enough there was a great mass of counterfeit five and ten dollar bills, with four plates from which they had evidently been printed.

"Well, well! This is great!" exclaimed the clerk. How in the world did you get it from Manister?"

"Tell you later," replied Harry. "Meanwhile you express this to the address I'll give you, and I'll make another strike at him. I'm not through yet by any means."

The clerk readily gave his promise to attend to the matter, and Young King Brady addressed the package to the office.

Then he went out and walked straight to the mysterious house in the lots.

Young King Brady was warming up to the business now.

He wanted nothing better than to meet Manister.

So he tried no backhanded business, but went boldly up the steps and rang the bell.

After being refused admittance, Young King Brady ran down the steps and went around to the back of the house.

It was a risky business, but he was determined.

Without an instant's hesitation he climbed over the fence and dropped down into the yard.

At the same instant the kitchen door flew open and out bounced a bloodhound as big as a calf.

"Sic him! Sic him, Prince!" cried an old woman who showed herself behind the dog at the door.

Young King Brady was quite ready for that move.

He instantly drew his revolver and shot the dog dead just as the brute was about to spring at him.

The woman screamed and slammed the door.

Young King Brady was against it in a moment.

It resisted all his efforts.

It was as firm as the door in front.

By this time Harry was pretty well assured that he had a woman to deal with, and that Manister was actually not in the house.

His pistol shot and the noise he was making might attract people even in that lonely spot.

Climbing the fence again he caught the leader, and at the risk of his life managed to swing himself over upon the nearest window sill.

The window was fastened, of course, but this fact did not stop the detective.

He deliberately drove his elbow through the glass, and reaching up turned the catch.

It was an easy matter to open the window then.

As Harry sprang into the room he heard the woman come running up the stairs.

"Get out of this house!" she screamed, "or I'll shoot you!"

Then she flourished a revolver and fired.

It was close quarters.

Harry sprang upon her and wrenched the revolver away without much difficulty.

"I've got you where I want you, now!" he exclaimed. "Take me to the room where you've hidden that girl!"

The woman began to whimper.

"Who are you?" she demanded. "Why do you break in here?"

Young King Brady showed his shield.

"Listen, ma'am," he said, "I am a detective. I am onto the whole gang. Manister and Decker will be arrested before night. The counterfeit plates and enough of the queer to do the business are all in my hands. It's fifteen years for each one of you, but if you——"

"Stop! Will you let me go if I do as you ask?" cried the woman eagerly.

"I will."

"That's enough. Come!"

She led the way upstairs to the rear room and hastily locked the door.

A young girl sprang forward, uttering a cry of joy at the sight of Harry.

"Oh, Mr. Brady! have you come to take me away?" she exclaimed. "I knew you would!"

"Miss Dora! Thank heaven I've found you!" cried Harry, his feelings almost getting the better of him in the excitement of the moment.

Then came a great surprise.

"Why, I'm not Dora! I am Teresa," said the girl, drawing back.

Young King Brady almost dropped.

"Was there ever such a muddle as this case has been," he exclaimed. "How can you be Teresa? Did I not send you home on the cars?"

"Ah, yes, but I didn't go, Mr. Brady."

"Didn't go?"

"No; I couldn't go and leave my sister a prisoner in this dreadful house, so I turned back and came straight here, and——"

"Oh, I may as well tell the rest," broke in the old woman. "I dragged her in and locked her up. You see, Mr. Brady, Manister was here and took her sister away just before she came."

"Took her away! Where to?" demanded Harry.

"Oh, she won't tell me! She won't tell me!" sobbed Teresa. "Make her tell, Mr. Brady! It drives me wild to think of Dora being in that man's hands."

"She'll tell," said Harry, quietly. "Won't you, ma'am?"

"I will if you will keep your promise to me."

"I never go back on my promise."

"Tell what you know and Miss Akerman and I leave this house."

"He took her to New York," said the woman. "The girl is drugged. He proposes to take her to Mr. Akerman's house to-night. He thinks that she knows something that can only be told there."

"Plates?" said Harry.

"Yes."

"My sister knows nothing about the Akerman house. She was never there in her life," Teresa cried.

It was a puzzle to Harry to understand how Manister could bring himself to imagine that Dora knew the hiding place of the missing plates.

He did not believe the old woman's story and he told her so.

She stuck to it, however, and nothing could turn her.

After some further talk Young King Brady, taking Teresa with him, left the house.

"You had better make yourself scarce," he said to the old woman. "This house is going to be raided, and if you are found here I will not raise my finger to keep you out of Sing Sing."

"They won't find me here," was the reply, and immediately afterward Young King Brady and Teresa started for New York.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TABLES TURNED.

No one would ever have guessed that the foxy old detective was anything else than a man wholly unconscious as the carriage rolled on down the Bowery.

Evidently his companions thought so.

We do not propose to call this person "Mr. Edmands" any more.

Old King Brady knew better.

He had located the face now in spite of the careful attempts that had been made to change it.

He knew that he had to deal with a woman in male disguise.

Her first move was to search the detective.

Old King Brady chuckled as she took away a revolver and examined his private memorandum book.

He had another revolver—yes, two others, both hidden in his secret pockets.

As for the memorandum book, it was written in cipher, and he knew very well that she could make nothing of it.

To this conclusion the woman seemed to come after a moment, for she restored it to the detective's pocket, putting the revolver in her own.

"I don't really want to do the old man any harm," she murmured. "He was a good friend to me in days gone by. Still he must be taken off this case. If my suspicions are true we can never hope to escape while he is at large."

What were her suspicions?

We can only say that those remarks confirmed those of the old detective.

He had not a doubt now as to who really murdered Peter Akerman.

"This will be a star case if I succeed in bringing it to a successful finish," he thought. "I asked for more time too quick. I shouldn't wonder at all if I was able to finish up to-night."

As they rode on he wondered what Harry was doing.

It did not seem to him then that there was any possibility of Young King Brady being able to throw any light on the Akerman mystery.

And yet, as we know, Harry had good reason to think very differently just about that time.

The carriage now turned out of the Bowery and ran along Grand Street east.

Old King Brady occasionally opened one corner of his eye just to see where they were going.

The disguised woman seemed to be in a brown study.

Her face wore a look of distress which made the old detective pity her.

Indeed, it is a fact that, instead of feeling hard toward her, he really admired the woman for what she had done.

"If I can't get the best of her at the end I'll know the reason why," he thought. "Let her play her game to a finish. This is going to come out all right in the end."

He continued to watch their progress until they reached Jackson Street, where they turned off again, and after several more turnings stopped before a disreputable looking old house at the upper end of Cherry Street.

"Ah!" thought Old King Brady, "this is the brother-in-law's. I'll bet her husband don't know that such a man exists."

The disguised woman got out hastily, closing the carriage door after her.

Old King Brady could have easily escaped then, but it was no part of his purpose to do anything of the sort.

"I'll take my chances," he thought. "I can do better with her in the house than out here."

In a moment the woman appeared accompanied by a villainous looking old Italian.

The carriage door was opened and between them they dragged the detective out.

No doubt the few who saw it done thought the detective simply drunk.

The carriage waited at the door.

Once in the house the detective was dragged into a decently furnished room and dropped upon a lounge.

A woman now appeared from an inner room.

The conversation which followed was in Italian.

Old King Brady listened attentively, for he understood a little of that language.

The woman seemed to be afraid to have him there.

The man, however, seemed willing enough to carry out the wishes of his disguised visitor.

All he wanted was pay in advance, and that was just what she did not seem to want to give.

At last she yielded.

Old King Brady saw five hundred dollars in bills change hands.

"She means to have me killed," he thought. "If it was just to hold me a prisoner the price would not be so high."

This matter settled, the Italian now turned to the supposed unconscious man and proceeded to examine him.

"Better do it now," he suddenly said in English. "There will be no better time."

That was just what Old King Brady thought.

He was very sure there would be no better time for his plans.

His eyes were still closed to all appearances, but he could see under the lids, and when the Italian pulled out a long knife and the woman with a frightened cry retreated into the back room the detective was sure there would be no better time.

His hand was on one of his hidden revolvers, and he suddenly leaped to his feet, covering the Italian.

At the same instant he whipped out the second revolver in the other hand and covered the disguised woman, too.

"Advance a step and you both die!" he cried.

Adding, "drop that knife, you Ginny! Drop it now."

The knife fell to the floor and the Italian, with his face as white as a sheet, started for the door.

Old King Brady saw that he had a coward to deal with, and acted accordingly.

"Stay where you are!" he said, sternly, "and as for you, madam, if you want to save your husband from the electric chair, listen to me!"

"Discovered!" gasped the woman, covering her face with her hands. "I might have known!"

"Of course you might have known me as well as I know you, Mrs. Cramer!" replied the detective. "You know me of old. Understand one thing, if I fail to appear at the Akerman house by half-past five your husband will instantly be arrested. Those are my orders and they will be carried out."

"Foiled!" groaned Mrs. Cramer, for the supposed "Mr. Edmands" was no one else. "Oh, Mr. Brady, I never should have tried to fight you."

"Certainly not," replied the detective.

"But my husband is innocent of the Akerman murder."

"Very likely. If you want to prove it you will do just as I say."

The woman thought a moment and then said something in Italian to the man.

"Speak English!" cried the detective, sternly. "Is it yes or no? Go quietly with me and I will make no move against this man here, who I know very well is your brother-in-law, Speretti. Do you suppose I have forgotten

the time when I arrested you for the murder of your first husband, fifteen years ago?"

"Stop! I give up. I'll go!" exclaimed Mrs. Cramer. "I'll confess all. It was I who murdered Peter Akerman. I beat his brains out with a club."

There was a cry of horror from the other room, and the woman came running in.

"No, no! It's a lie! She loves him so that she says it! It's all a lie!" the woman called out loud enough to be heard in the street.

"Be quiet," said Old King Brady. "Of course it's a lie. I know she is frightened. It is because she is frightened that she would have killed me, her best friend. Come, Mrs. Cramer, come with me. We will talk of this as we ride along."

Mightily astonished was the coachman to see the detective come walking out of the house and land the disguised woman into the carriage.

"Drive back to the house where we came from as fast as you can," said Old King Brady, sternly. "If you happen to make a mistake and try to turn off there will be a broken window in this carriage and a bullet in your back."

Now we cannot detail the conversation which passed between Old King Brady and Mrs. Cramer during their ride back to the scene of the crime.

It referred chiefly to that old murder for which this woman had been arrested and tried.

That she escaped with a light sentence in Sing Sing was entirely due to the detective's efforts then, and the whole matter has no reference at all to the star case of the Bradys which we are discussing now.

"Write and tell your husband to meet you at the Akerman house at midnight," said the detective as they turned up Fifth Avenue at last. "I will then question him, and if he can clear his skirts of this crime he shall have the chance."

Of course Mrs. Cramer objected to this strange request.

In reply the detective informed her that if she did not do it Mr. Cramer would be immediately arrested.

"You believe him guilty," he said. "You know something which you have not told me. Let him prove his innocence if he can, but I shall give him no other chance than this."

Of course Mrs. Cramer yielded in the end.

She had to; there was no help for it.

In Peter Akerman's library the letter was written, and then Mrs. Cramer was escorted upstairs and locked in one of the upper rooms, and an officer put to guard the door.

Old King Brady now summoned a messenger boy and dispatched the letter.

But this was not all.

He telephoned headquarters and ordered Mr. Cramer shadowed.

"If he attempts to leave the city or goes anywhere but to his own house as midnight approaches arrest him at once," was the further order which went over the 'phone.

And Old King Brady knew that these orders would be strictly obeyed.

Having done all this the detective felt free for a time, and

he started off to get something to eat, for he had not broken his fast since the day before.

He was not long about it, for Old King Brady was not the man to waste much time in rest and refreshment.

On his way back to the Akerman house, whither he now bent his steps, he turned into Central Park, as it was not much further to go that way than to walk directly along the avenue.

He had not gone far before, to his surprise, he saw Young King Brady ahead of him accompanied by a young woman who wore two ostrich plumes in her hat.

They seemed to be earnestly talking, and at the same time the old detective could see that Harry's eyes were everywhere.

"What game is he playing now?" thought Old King Brady, and he followed on slowly without attempting to attract the attention of his pupil.

All at once he was startled by seeing a girl coming out of one of the side paths who in face and form was almost the duplicate of Harry's companion.

Accompanying her was a tall man wearing side whiskers and a mustache.

He was dressed in a checked suit, wore a high hat with a mourning band around it, and carried an umbrella.

The girl hung on his arm in the most curious fashion.

Her head kept falling forward and she staggered.

Any one else might have supposed that she was drunk, but Old King Brady saw at a glance that she had been drugged.

"The man who tried to do me up at Akerman's," thought the old detective. "Harry must know! We must arrest the fellow right now!"

He quickened his steps.

Before he could come up with Young King Brady the girl who accompanied him suddenly looked up and saw the pair coming toward her.

It all happened in a minute, and the man had not discovered them until she screamed and rushed toward the drugged girl.

"Dora! Dora! Oh, I have found you at last!" she cried.

The girl threw up her hands and sank down unconscious upon the walk.

Harry sprang forward, caught her in his arms, and lifted her up, while Teresa, kneeling by her side, loosened the collar about her neck.

Children attracted by the cry ran up, and a policeman came hurrying forward.

Young King Brady assisted in reviving the senseless girl while Old King Brady laid a detaining hand on the shoulder of her escort.

"You must explain this mystery," said Old King Brady before the man Manister, for it was he, had time to make a move or say a word.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

The Bradys' star case was now drawing to a close, if appearances went for anything.

In the parlor of the Akerman mansion as the evening wore on we find a group, all of whom have been very intimately associated with the case.

There was Old King Brady and Young King Brady, and the Akerman sisters and Mr. Manister.

They had been having a long and earnest talk, all but Manister, who had said but little.

The man was a prisoner, and he knew that all chance of escape had vanished.

There were six officers in the house, and even then one guarded the door.

Directly from the park they had bent their steps to the Akerman mansion.

Of course the park policeman lent the famous detectives every assistance as soon as he discovered who they were.

Dora Akerman soon regained consciousness, and as the effect of the drug which Manister had given her was now wearing off she was able to accompany the detectives to her uncle's house with no other aid than her sister's arm.

Here a grand comparison of notes was had.

Old King Brady told but little of his doings, but Young King Brady related all that had happened to him.

Manister blustered and put on a bold front at first, but soon subsided.

He knew he was in the hands of men who could not be bluffed, and now for a long time he had sat silent, his manacled hands resting upon his knees, when suddenly Old King Brady turned upon him, saying:

"Well, my friend, seeing that you failed to kill me last night, we may as well have a little talk. It's your turn now. What have you to say in answer to all that you have heard my assistant tell, a good deal of which bears rather heavily against you?"

"Nothing," growled Manister. "I don't suppose there's any use in my talking. I'm pinched, and you fellows will railroad me spite of everything. I'll confess, but I want to say right here I didn't murder the old man."

"No. I don't believe you did. In fact, I'm sure you didn't," replied Old King Brady.

"You do well to confess," he added, "and since it saves me trouble and will save the State expense, I will speak a good word for you and try to have your sentence made as light as possible."

"Thank you," growled Manister. "Shall I make my confession now or wait till later on?"

"Wait," said the detective, "but you can answer me one or two questions first."

"Well?"

"Let me ask one," broke in Young King Brady. "Why did you start to bring Miss Dora to this house?"

"Ask her?" growled Manister. "We were coming here, that's right, but we were going to wait till dark and come in by the secret way old Akerman had built for the benefit of the gang."

"Well," said Harry, turning to Dora, "why was it? What does he mean?"

"Why," said Dora, "it is such a curious thing that I hardly like to tell it, but I suppose I ought."

"Tell it, my dear; tell it," said Old King Brady in his fatherly way.

"You would hardly believe that I could fall asleep in that dreadful house over there in Greenpoint," began Dora. "When I first found myself in that room I was almost crazy. I don't know about what I said and did. I suppose I wore my strength out by the way I went on, but at all events I finally threw myself on the bed and fell asleep and dreamed that I was in this house, where I had never been before."

"Yes," said Old King Brady, as she paused. "Well? What more?"

"I dreamed that I went into the room behind there—the library you call it," continued Dora, "and that there was a portrait of my uncle on the wall as he looked when he was a young man. I went up to the picture and pulled it down, and there behind it was a hole in which lay a china plate. I was calling out, 'the plate is behind the picture in the library,' when I suddenly awoke and found that man standing in the room beside me. That is all."

"Strange," murmured Old King Brady.

"Well, do you understand why I wanted the girl here now?" asked the counterfeiter sarcastically. "I'm superstitious, I am. I thought that dream meant something, and——"

"And I know what you thought," broke in Harry. "You want certain plates which Akerman made——"

"Photographed," said Manister. "He was studying photography to use it in our business. When I come to confess you will know that Peter Akerman had been a crook all his life."

"Strange," said Old King Brady again. "Do you believe in dreams, Mr. Manister?"

"Yes, I do."

"By the way, you are some relation to the late Mr. Akerman, I have been told."

"You lie! You've not been told. You only guess at it. I'm his sister's son, if you want to know."

"And cousin to these girls?"

"Yes. Why do you ask?"

"Because I heard you say something about looking for a will to destroy; isn't that it, governor?" broke in Harry.

"Yes," replied Old King Brady. "You see if the Akerman girls don't inherit he is the next heir. Now about this dream. Walk into the next room, ladies. Is that the picture you saw, Miss Dora?"

Old King Brady pointed to the picture which hung over the mantelpiece.

"The very one," said Dora, who had not been here before. "This is strange."

"There are many strange things in this world," said Old King Brady. "Now look here."

He put up his hand, touched a secret spring and the portrait flew outward, frame and all.

"I knew it," cried Manister, who had followed them.

"Look in there," said Old King Brady.

Manister did so, but the space behind the picture was empty.

"It is very strange," said Dora. "A part of my dream seems to be true, but not all."

"Wait," said Old King Brady.

He then unlocked the table drawer and took out a

folded paper and two plates upon which were the impressions of both sides of a ten dollar bill.

"The missing plates!" cried Manister. "Oh, if I had only known!"

"Found behind the picture," said Old King Brady, "and this with it."

He held up the paper.

"It is the last will and testament of Peter Akerman!" he exclaimed, "and it leaves these two young ladies every dollar of his wealth."

It was midnight.

The two Bradys sat in the library of the Akerman mansion.

Mr. Manister was by this time in the Tombs, and the sisters had returned to their humble home in Bank Street.

Outside no policeman guarded the house; inside none could be seen.

It was just the Bradys talking over their star case alone.

"Harry, you have done remarkably well," said Old King Brady. "You have picked up every thread in the puzzling tangle of this most mysterious case. I congratulate you, my boy."

"Well, I don't know whether I'm to be congratulated or not," replied Harry, "rather dejectedly."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, you know I was working this case for love, governor?"

"Yes, and I for glory."

"Well, Miss Dora informed me when I left her at her door that she was engaged to be married to a gentleman in the department store where she has worked."

"A good thing for you, Harry."

"For him, you mean."

"No, I mean for you. I saw that you had been smitten, and I confess I was alarmed for fear I should lose my assistant."

"And I rather think I've lost my share in the Akerman millions."

"Unless you take the other sister," laughed Old King Brady.

"No," said Harry, "I don't want her."

Just then the big clock in the hall struck twelve.

"Into the closet, Harry," exclaimed Old King Brady, springing up.

Now the closet meant was the one down stairs where the secret passage ended, and as Young King Brady started to obey the older detective began to make one of those lightning changes of costume for which he is so famous.

Just how he did it we are under obligation not to state, but inside of two minutes a totally different looking person stood by the library table.

If there had been any one present who had known the late Peter Akerman they might well have been excused for thinking that the strange old man had come back to life again.

Old King Brady turned down the gas to a mere glimmer and then crawled under the table.

Breathlessly he waited.

Young King Brady in the closet below was waiting, too.

The minutes dragged slowly on.

To Old King Brady they seemed like hours.

He was getting cramped under the table when all at once he heard a footstep on the stairs.

"The time has come," murmured the old detective, and he felt certain that it was the murderer of Peter Akerman who was about to enter the room.

At all events, it was Mr. Cramer.

As he crossed the threshold and peered into the darkened room a tall form rose slowly up from behind the table.

"Cramer, how could you do it?" was spoken in deep, sepulchral tones.

There was a yell of horror and the man backed toward the door.

"Confess your crime!" said Old King Brady. "Own to the world that you are my murderer. Say the words and I'll disappear!"

"I am! I killed you!" groaned the wretched man, who, now that he had taken one step backward, seemed paralyzed with fear.

"That's enough!" cried a voice behind him. "Turn up the light, governor!"

And as the light flashed upon the library Peter Akerman's murderer found himself struggling in Young King Brady's arms.

* * * * *

"Why did he do it?"

This was the question all New York was asking when the news of Mr. Cramer's crime was cried in the streets next day.

But when it came to be understood, through Old King Brady's efforts, that Cramer had robbed Mr. Akerman of certain valuable stocks, the matter was better understood.

But no one understood what became of Mrs. Cramer but the Bradys.

Old King Brady advised the woman to disappear, and she did, but a certain Mr. Edmands visited the condemned murderer up to the hour when he went to the electric chair.

"I had to do it because she loved him," Old King Brady said to Harry. "She had been trying to lead an honest life. She wasn't such a bad woman, after all."

Manister went to Sing Sing and Decker, the blind man, joined him later, being arrested in the West.

No other members of the gang were captured. They took warning and fled.

Later, when the Akerman sisters came into their wealth, they built a fine house on the vacant lot in the rear of the mansion, which they sold.

Dora married the man of her choice, and some say that Young King Brady is paying attention to Teresa.

And thus ended the Brady's STAR CASE, undertaken, not for money, but for LOVE AND GLORY.

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